

# Praise, criticism for Pak Lah

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** There were bouquets and brickbats for the Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi administration at the end of a seminar yesterday.

Some of the panellists and speakers criticised the slow economic growth and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor.

In concluding their appraisal of Abdullah's three years in office as prime minister, they said the income gap was also widening between the races, within each race and from state to state.

Some said his leadership was too soft and accommodative, sending out conflicting messages to the people.

However, many praised the prime minister's achievements, too.

Foremost on the list was his open style of administration and leadership.

Many of the speakers lauded his focus on education, human capital and spiritual values while others commended him for having given women a larger role in the national development agenda.

They said he had introduced a vision and policies conducive to the progress of the nation's economy.

They said Abdullah would have to overcome four main challenges if his visions were to bear fruit:

- corruption had to be nipped in the bud;
- a more effective mechanism to manage the economy has to be put in place;
- there should be no easing of the stress on human capital development; and,
- unity should be stressed.