

# Enough of accusations, Abdullah tells critics

NST-29/11/2006

■ **By Wan Hamidi Hamid**  
news@nst.com.my

**PORT DICKSON:** Promises, promises, promises.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday stepped into the shoes of his critics, adopted their disbelieving tone and examined the meat of their barbs against his policies and plans.

There was a fair amount of frustration as he addressed questions on the economy, stock market, corruption and several other issues.

"When I make announcements on behalf of the government, some people say, it is yet another promise that can't be delivered.

"I've had enough of this accusation," he said at the closing of the PNB World Investment Challenge 2006 here yesterday.

The prime minister said he knew what the cynics were saying about him and his government, noting that this made Malaysians uneasy and promoted a negative perception of the country.

Below are some of the key points in his speech.

## ● On the economy:

### *What the cynics say:*

"There has been this perception that the prime minister has made good promises. Now they say, we would like to see what you've done. They say, 'Pak Lah, we've read about the 9MP, we understand it, but what are you going to do about it now?'"

"Some wonder whether the 9MP will succeed and say that Malaysia is good in planning but short on implementation."

### *The prime minister's reply:*

"We are committed to the people and we have a job to do. We want to ensure it is done effectively. The cynics, there will always be people like that.

"I know that people want to know about the implementation of the 9MP, but there are certain limits in trying to hurry up."

## ● On the stock market:

### *What the cynics say:*

"Talk of inefficiency of the stock market has been going around. Some people say that there is no excitement in the stock market because there are no good projects.

"The perception is that what's happening here is not good."

### *The prime minister's reply:*

"We've announced many things but some people have their own attitude. Today, there is better market sentiment. But I don't want to see a yo-yo effect. I would like to see steady growth"

## ● On the fight against corruption:

### *What the cynics say:*

"It is all about perception. If a certain person is not investigated by the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA), they say that person is being protected by the government, or somebody told the courts and the judge not to try the person. If he's convicted, then they say he's not a friend of the prime minister.

"How can you do work with this kind of people around?"

### *The prime minister's reply:*

"I've asked the ACA to improve itself. We've increased the number of officers. Recently, the ACA added 300 more officers. I want them to go to the ground.

"Begin their investigation as soon as possible without having to wait for the police report. Investigate, get the proof, bring them to court."

## ● On not netting the big fish:

### *What the cynics say:*

"They always say we don't catch the big fish, that we always go for small fish."

### *The prime minister's reply:*

"When a person commits a small offence of corruption, it's easy for the ACA to investigate and convict him. When some people say, what about the big fish, well, big fish are not easily caught. But the ACA is doing its best."

He also told the ACA to be more careful when handling corruption cases, as "it is not right if they drag people to court just to show that they (ACA) are doing something".

"If the prosecution does not get a conviction, the person's reputation would have been spoilt, his life would be in a mess and his company would not do well any more as the people would already have a negative perception of him."

In his 90-minute off-the-cuff remarks, Abdullah said old procedures and laws, including those formulated during the colonial era, should be re-looked and amended to ensure the smooth implementation of the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

"These laws were made a long time ago. It's very much a burden and it's about time that we re-looked those laws.

"If there are hindrances and obstacles in terms of achieving speed and accuracy, action should be taken to change them," he said.