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PM on why Kelantan is in growth region

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DATUK Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has described his responsibility as a prime minister as *fardu ain* or an individual obligation, one that is to be fulfilled to the best of his ability.

"It is not a *fardu kifayah* (collective obligation) for me ... and I am the prime minister for all, not just the Malays.

"My duty is to all Malaysians," he told 3,000 students at Malaysia's two-day Middle East Career Carnival at the Cairo International Convention Centre here.

He said this when relating an incident where he was asked why he had included the Pas-controlled Kelantan in the country's development programmes such as the East Coast Economic Region.



He added that the people should take inspiration from what was done in the past and find ways to lift the country up to a higher level of progress.

He cited the country's regional economic plans in the southern, northern and eastern regions as being different from those implemented before, with the private sector playing a major role in these projects.

"The government didn't want to burden the government de-

partments and agencies with additional responsibilities when it decided to introduce the respective plans.

"Neither did we want to set up a new department or agency to do so. So, we decided for the private sector to spearhead the economic plans."

The Iskandar Development Region in the south is led by Khazanah Nasional while the Northern Corridor Economic Region is managed by Sime Darby Bhd and the East Coast Economic Region by Petronas.

Abdullah said he was as impatient as others to see the government tackle social issues such as corruption.

"I didn't say there is no corruption or no abuse of power in the

country. We want to reduce and eventually eliminate it.

"I know there are people who are impatient for the government to get rid of corruption. I am impatient as well. But it takes time and we need all the help we can get."

He said claims that corruption was worse now was a perception brought about by the increased number of reports received by the Anti-Corruption Agency.

"This actually reflects the confidence people have in the ACA. There are many who are willing to come forward to give information and we have added 300 more people to the workforce. We have experts in forensic auditing who can tell by looking at the figures where the money has gone to or parked somewhere."



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