

Pak Lah upset over pollution and slow progress

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PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has expressed his sorrow and disappointment over young addicts, polluted rivers and the country's slow economic progress.

The Prime Minister said he was saddened by the high num-

ber of young hardcore drug addicts who contributed nothing but social ills to the country.

He was also disappointed with the way Malaysians had polluted the environment to the extent that rivers turned toxic.

"If a crocodile was put into such rivers it would also die," he said when addressing a group of lecturers from institu-

tions of higher learning here yesterday.

"The Klang and Gombak rivers which flow through Kuala Lumpur city used to be something we were proud of.

"But due to pollution, they are no longer beautiful.

"Millions of ringgit had to be spent to clean them," he said, adding that beaches and forests had not been spared either.

Upset with the nation's economic achievement compared to countries that were also "latecomers," such as Japan, China, India and Vietnam, the Prime Minister said Malaysians had a lot to do.

"Every generation must carry out their responsibility towards achieving developed status for the country.

"We (the older generation)

are planning for you (younger generation) now.

"We have to try, we must try, we cannot say cannot," he said, citing Japan as an example of a nation that was practically destroyed by war but rebuilt itself to become an economic powerhouse due to diligent and disciplined citizens.

Abdullah said Malaysians were not asked to work to-

wards Vision 2020 from scratch as the mission began many years ago.

The Prime Minister said Malaysians should not wait until the last minute to pursue the country's dream of becoming a developed nation.

There are only 14 years left to realise Vision 2020 and it would be best for everyone to start being proactive now, he added.