

Attack on PM won't distract from projects

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PUTRAJAYA: The government will not be sidetracked by the open criticism of the Prime Minister by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the government would continue its efforts to deliver on the promises made to the people.

"The effort, focus and concentration must not be sidetracked. We owe it to the people to deliver on our promises.

"We'll have to manage. This

(the attack on Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi by the former prime minister) is unprecedented. It's not something we have experience to draw on, but we'll have to manage.

"We'll ensure that the government and the Prime Minister have the full support of the Cabinet, administration and party members," Najib said at a Press conference after a meeting with Menteris Besar and Chief Ministers yesterday.

"The bottom line is, the gov-

ernment needs the support of the people, and the best way to get this is to ensure our promises are delivered."

Asked if the Council of Former MPs and State Assemblymen (Mubarak) had sent him a letter after its private meeting with Dr Mahathir recently, Najib said it had.

However, he refused to disclose its contents, saying that it was a "normal letter expressing concerns about current developments".

He said while the meeting between Abdullah and Dr Mahathir did not yield any result, "at least the effort was made (by Mubarak)".

As for his meeting with the Menteris Besar and Chief Ministers, Najib said all states had agreed to implement a pilot project in early childhood education and care.

The informal education programme for children up to six years is meant to stimulate their creativity and develop

their interest in learning.

"This concept has proven successful in other countries where children who participate in such a programme are sharper, perform better academically in the future, mature faster, and are psychologically more well-developed."

The Cabinet has approved RM20 million for the pilot phase, which will be conducted in urban, rural and estate environments to assess the project's impact on children

from various socio-economic backgrounds.

The pilot project will be implemented by the Council on Streamlining Childcare and Early Education (Permata), a group of academicians and professionals. Najib's wife, Datin Seri Paduka Rosmah Mansor, is Permata chairman.

The state government heads also discussed land issues for the implementation of federal projects, and ways to boost agriculture.