

Pak Lah: Confidence in government very high now

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KUALA LUMPUR: Confidence in the Government is "very high" at the moment, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, attributing it to the country's healthy economic growth and improving trade ties with other nations, among others.

Speaking on broad-ranging issues in a three-part interview with Astro's Phoenix channel, the Prime Minister reiterated that efforts had been made to ensure efficiency.

He added that there was also the insistence on good governance and prudent management of the country's finances and economy.

"And at the same time, we ensure that there is continuous stability. Politically, at the moment, we are not facing any problems," he said on *Interview with Glitterati*.

Commended on the 7.6% gross domestic product growth for the first quarter, Abdullah

responded with a laugh: "How can I do that? I don't know how I did it. Work hard."

Asked about predictions by economists that Malaysia was going to have 6.5% growth this year as a whole, he said: "That's a good achievement. So, a good start, we hope, will end with a good ending."

On the Government's anti-graft war, the Prime Minister said: "I hope I'm beginning to make some good impact."

"So, what we are doing in fighting corruption and also in improving the public services delivery system, creating efficiency, is to make the cost of doing business cheaper. Reduce the cost of doing business. That's good. Therefore, you create good feelings."

Abdullah said it had been an exciting time for him with lots of challenges and support from the people as seen in the "more than a landslide" win of the

Barisan Nasional in the just-concluded general elections.

The acting president of Umno, said he would have to "wait and see" if there was going to be another round of landslide support for him at the party's general assembly.

On Malaysia's relationship with China over the past 30 years and perceptions by Japan and the United States that China's growth was a threat to the world, Abdullah said: "We never had the perception of a China threat."

"We always look at China as an opportunity to co-operate and to derive economic benefits from such co-operation."

On Malaysia's rejection of US ideas to patrol the Malacca Straits and sending troops to southern Thailand to purportedly take care of terrorists, Abdullah said Malaysia, together with Singapore and Indonesia could look after the strait.