

Involve students in co-ops, says PM

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Abdullah admiring a model of the Prime Minister's Department presented to him by Khaled (centre). With them is department director-general Datuk Zainuddin Abdul Rahman.

KUALA LUMPUR: Co-operative movements should be part of co-curricular activity in schools.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said young people should be exposed to the movements at an early age.

The Prime Minister will direct Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein to incorporate this in co-curricular activity.

"Co-operatives are becoming an important part of the economy as they are venturing into various sectors such as small- and medium-scale industries, agriculture, service sector and other growth engines," Abdullah said at the launch of the National Co-operative Day 2006 at the Malaysian International Exhibition and Convention Centre at the Mines Resort City yesterday.

Also present at the event was Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

"This is why we have to instil interest in this field among the younger generation.

"Where else do we start doing this but in schools."

Abdullah said children exposed to co-operative move-

ments at schools would be interested in joining such movements on leaving school or at least support the movement in general.

"Besides gaining exposure in co-operative movements, pupils will also be able to cultivate their interest in entrepreneurship."

Abdullah said the 2,000 co-operatives in schools nationwide still constituted a very small number in the larger picture.

He said this was why he wanted the Education Ministry to work with the Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development Ministry to have more co-operative movements in schools.

There are now 4,771 co-operatives in the country with almost six million members, shares totalling RM6.84 billion and assets worth over RM34.86 billion.

Abdullah later presented awards for various categories to outstanding co-operatives and co-operative leaders.

Topping the list was the Petronas Employees Co-operative which bagged the National Co-operative Award that came with a cash prize of RM30,000, a certificate and a trophy.