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# Abdullah: It's about people's perception

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**PUTRAJAYA:** With five months to go before he steps down, will Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi have enough time to do what he intends to do?

"I must remain focused in terms of what I want to achieve. We have done some work, but we also have some problems getting them off the ground," the prime minister said.

"What I propose is good and important for the country, so I believe people who choose to obstruct progress are not acting in the interest of the country or the people.

"As I said, I want to get these reforms done and if I need to bring other people in to help me accomplish them, I'll do it."

He said institutional reforms, for some reason, usually did not interest many people.

"But I believe that this is a crucial area for Malaysia, especially if we aspire to be a ma-

ture, developed nation. The perception of our institutions has eroded over time.

"It does not matter whether this perception is right or wrong. It is a negative perception and if not addressed, it will harden into reality.

"Once people lose their trust and confidence in institutions, the country cannot function properly. People must believe in the effectiveness of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies. They must believe that the government is serious about fighting corruption. What I am trying to do is formalise these changes."

Abdullah said the country's social safety net must be broadened and improved to look after less fortunate Malaysians and the development corridor initiative was also important because it allowed quality opportunities throughout the country, and not just in urban centres.

"I know that people keep asking, 'where are the results?' But we should realise that these are long-term plans which will take a number of years to be fully implemented.

"Still, I realise that visible results are important, so I hope we can make some tangible progress in six months."

Asked whether he could get the support of his cabinet for some of the reforms, he said, "I am confident.

"If not, I will have to find people who support the changes that I am proposing."

Asked whether he could get support from the opposition, his replied: "Why not?"

"I don't think the opposition will block the reforms just because of politics. If they do, they would be doing a disservice to the Malaysian public.

"I hope there are enough common areas. Let us fight for the sake of the people." — Bernama