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We'll fall apart without consensus, warns Razali

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IPOH, Thurs. - Malaysia will fall apart if the people do not come to a consensus soon on major issues affecting them, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister Tan Sri Razali Ismail said today.

He said this would affect the leadership and the country's survival in its march towards globalisation.

He said even though the question of leadership was important, the solidarity of the people was paramount as it was the foundation for a stable and healthy government.

"There must be a concerted effort among Malaysians to reach a common stand and come to a consensus.

"Without consensus, we will be left behind. In order for us to move forward as a united front, we must reach an understanding and move together as one."

Razali cited the issue of teaching Science and Mathematics in English as an example, where differing opinions had caused conflict among leaders.

"We must reach a consensus on the matter, surely there are bigger problems the Government has to deal with than this."

Razali told reporters this after delivering a talk on "Malaysia in the New Millennium: The Prospects and Challenges" at the Perak civil servants' monthly gathering at the State Secretariat today.

He said Western countries were more united than Malaysia even when they had frequent leadership changes because they had a common stand.

"The leadership may change but the people are always solidly behind the new government.

"We can get there, but there are issues that we still bicker about. In Thailand for example it is easier to come to a consensus because of the homogeneous composition.

"Even though we are a pluralistic community we can still come to a consensus by reaching out to each other," he said.

On leadership, Razali said the people must choose the right leader as the wrong person would halt the continuity and push the country backwards.

"Choose the right leaders and do not just rely on people from political parties.

"Malaysians must realise that there may not be another Dr Mahathir Mohamad in another 100 years. They must make the right choice in order for the country to keep developing and moving forward," he said.

Razali also called on Malaysians to compete in the international arena and participate as global players.