

Pak Lah: 'Don't stoke the flames of race'
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Former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the people must liberalise their mindset in order for reforms to be instituted effectively.

Citing the transformation measures implemented by his successor Najib Tun Razak, Abdullah said, "For any reform to happen, the people themselves must liberalise their mindset in the first place. We can't reform until our mind is liberalised."

He said this at the National Unity Forum 2010 special luncheon keynote address organised by the Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS), Kuala Lumpur, today.

Abdullah stressed that delicate issues involving race, religion and culture must be managed carefully to avoid it from getting out of control.

Likening such sensitive issues to "fire", he said harping on the issues would only have adverse effects on society itself.

"We need to be careful about how we deal with the issues of race, religion and culture. Don't ever play with 'fire'. We don't want this country to be on 'fire' because of such issues or extremist feelings," he said

Abdullah said that despite the country having gained independence over 50 years ago, fostering unity among its multiracial society was still an ongoing process and that it should not be taken for granted.

He stressed that unity and racial harmony must prevail to be inherited by future generations.

Earlier in his opening speech, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Koh Tsu Koon said for multi-racial Malaysians to practise a more effective inclusiveness, they must engage and interact more with people of other races.

He said this included learning about the different cultures and accepting different views from a person's own.

"Inclusiveness can only be a reality when we actually interact with each other in our daily life.

"As such, it is important for us to open up our hearts and minds to engage, not to enrage, in order for us to have effective inclusiveness, which is the core of the 1Malaysia concept," he added.

- Bernama

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