

# Maintain strength in unity

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysians must retain the spirit of consensus and cooperation which have become the pillar of national strength since independence, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said last night.

He said the country's development enjoyed today was the result of unity that had long been forged among the people of various races and religions.

"The solidarity of Malaysians is our strength, we need to ensure that we maintain that strength. A good consensus, a strong and effective cooperation, these are important," he said in a special message aired over radio and television in conjunction with the nation's 49th National Day celebration.

Abdullah said in instilling and safeguarding unity, each Malaysian must have patience, be considerate, give

priority to collaboration and respect each other.

Referring to the May 13, 1969, incident, Abdullah reminded Malaysians to learn from the dark moments in the country's history and avoid doing something that could disrupt unity and racial collaboration.

Things that caused consensus to crumble would erode the country's strength and make it weak, he said.

"What causes hardship to us, we must avoid, that's the meaning of learning from history. Besides, we need to make our mark in history to build a civilisation for the future," he said.

Abdullah said the present generation now enjoying the fruits of the struggle of past generations had the obligation to make Malaysia a more developed and successful country to be inherited by the next generation.

*Let's celebrate*



"Or at least ensure that the country has a government with well organised plans so that our country can progress further," he said.

Abdullah said serious attention must be given to the struggle towards achieving Vision 2020, when Malaysia would hopefully be declared as a developed nation in that year.

He stressed that the people should strive wholeheartedly to face various new challenges like globalisation, lib-

eralisation and competition from other countries.

"Are we able to succeed when faced with such competition (from other countries)? Will we be able to get as much as we need when faced with such rivalry? These are the questions before us, and we must have the best answers and respond to them," Abdullah said.

"Therefore, it's my fervent hope that the people and Government will continue to cooperate and both sides will put their minds and efforts to realise it."

The Prime Minister also reminded the public sector that it had a crucial role in developing the country even though the private sector had been given the role to generate a more robust economic growth.

"The public sector has the power to enforce laws and regulations, and also

the capacity to draw up the necessary policies. So, its role cannot be separated, and cannot be considered less important," he said.

Therefore, he said, the public sector must strive to facilitate any private sector initiative that would bring benefit and prosperity to the country.

Touching on the National Day celebrations, Abdullah said all Malaysians should celebrate the day with pride as a way to show their gratitude and joy for the peace and progress enjoyed so far.

After 49 years of independence, the Prime Minister said, Malaysia had developed robustly and achieved successes in various fields.

"Surely, we are grateful because we can say that our country is peaceful and safe for all Malaysians, even though we still remember the incident that happened in 1969," he said.