

# Responsible media crucial, says Abdullah

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■ By Eileen Ng  
eileen@nst.com.my

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Malaysian media has been responsible in its reporting and in helping the government to maintain harmony in the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said there were times when the government requested the media to understand its stand on certain issues, especially sensitive ones related to religion and race.

"Praise be to God, to date, the media has been co-operative and is still responsible, so thank you very much," he said after delivering his keynote address at the Mass Media Conference 2007 yesterday.

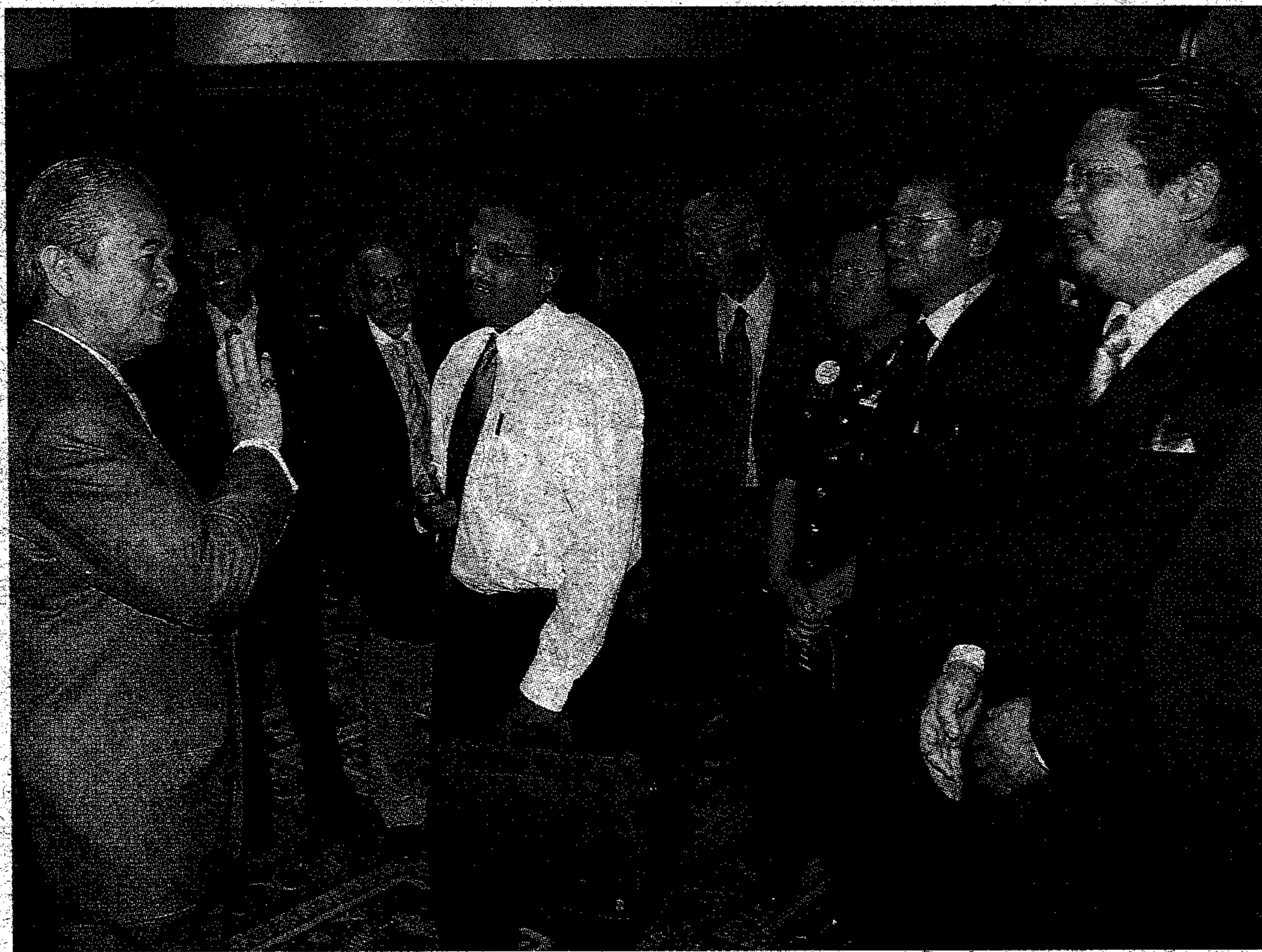
The two-day conference was organised by the Internal Security Ministry and attended by 500 participants from Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Abdullah, who is also the Internal Security Minister, said history had proven that the media played an important role in helping the government to boost racial unity and patriotism, especially during times of uncertainties.

He said both parties had worked together through various challenges like the struggle for Independence, threats from the communists, confrontation with Indonesia and May 13 racial tensions, which had brought about great changes to the country's political and social landscape.

"If we read up on history, (we know) the media had played its role responsibly. If not, there would be greater unrest ... we would be in a state of uncertainty."

He said history had also shown that the media had helped in cre-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (left) speaking to local and foreign media practitioners after officiating the Mass Media Conference 2007 yesterday. — Bernama picture

ating a stable environment in the country through balanced and responsible reporting.

"The country would not have progressed to what it has achieved today without close co-operation between both parties."

Abdullah said the co-operation and understanding between the media and the government were based on the objective that everyone wanted the country to remain stable and peaceful.

"We want the principles of Rukun Negara to be respected,

the Constitution and laws upheld and parliamentary democracy protected," he said.

Despite various challenges faced by the media, Abdullah expressed hope that the close understanding between the media and the government would remain.

He said news travelled fast and this had caused different reactions among media practitioners, so much so that sometimes, emotionally-driven actions occurred.

As a result, he suggested that there be guidelines to address is-

ues to determine the stories that could be published, played down or ignored.

Later, Abdullah attended a dinner at the Palace of the Golden Horses Hotel organised by the Internal Security Ministry in conjunction with the conference.

Among the guests were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Effendi Norwawi and his wife, Datin Seri Tiara Jacqueline.

Guests were entertained by singer Norynn Aziz.