

Unity key to progress

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PM: History shows how vital racial harmony is

PUTRAJAYA: Racial unity must continue to be the key component of Malaysia's development, peace and safety, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

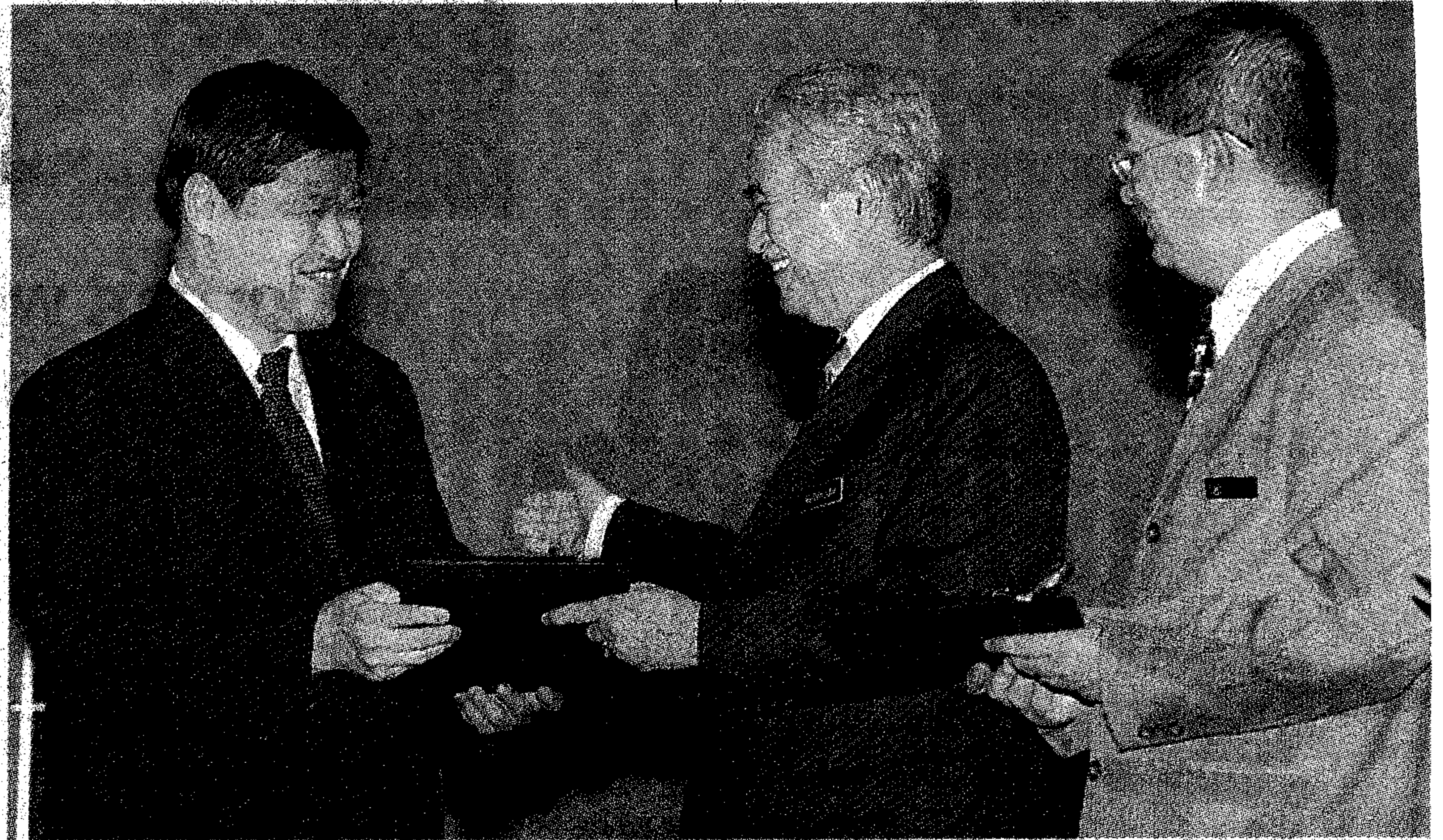
The history of the nation, and its journey and struggle towards development since independence showed how vital racial unity was, he added.

He said Malaysia must always be known as a country that could manage race relations, especially with its capable and far-sighted leaders from political parties that championed the interest of all races.

The country's forefathers, he said, had instilled the need for tolerance, understanding and peace among all races during its struggle, adding that it had to continue to this day.

Abdullah said that all races were given similar opportunities and the country's wealth was distributed equally and no one received exclusive help.

"Sincerity must always be the attitude of Malaysians who love the



Special appointment: Former Kota Melaka MP Kerk Kim Hock receiving his appointment letter as a member of the national unity advisory panel from Abdullah in Putrajaya yesterday. With them is Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Maximus Ongkili.

country and race to prevent racial tension which will not benefit us," he said before presenting appointment letters to 55 members of the national unity advisory panel and state unity committee.

The panel members comprised

ministers, deputy ministers, heads of departments, state secretaries, non-government organisation members, political leaders as well as former politicians.

Abdullah advised the members to have dialogues to find ways to main-

tain unity among races and be attuned to the objectives of the committee.

At the same time, he advised them not to be overzealous and that being too cautious would not help when making decisions.