

# PM: National unity is like love

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## It has to be nurtured always

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**SARAJEVO:** National unity, like love, has to be continuously nurtured to be truly successful, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Citing an example, the Prime Minister said a married couple must always treasure their love for each other.

"You must continue to declare your love for your wife even if you were to live for 100 years," he said in his public lecture on "Nation Building in a Plural Society" at the University of Sarajevo yesterday.

Sharing Malaysia's recipe in governing a country with a multi-ethnic population like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Abdullah said the same principle applied for national unity, too.

Abdullah said Malaysia, despite its 50 years of experience in building a united nation, still had to grapple with issues concerning relationships among the ethnic and religious groups.

He said the simple truth was that nation building must be a joint effort by both the government and the people.

"The people at large and civil society, including institutions of higher learning, are all stakeholders in the process of nation building.

"The best solution is to get everybody involved so that no one will feel marginalised or discriminated against," he said.

Abdullah said Malaysia had transformed itself from an agriculture-based economy to a centre for labour-intensive manufacturing, before moving to high technology, skills and capital-intensive manufacturing.

"Bosnia and Herzegovina can emulate our example or adopt a different approach for wealth creation and sustainable growth," he said.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, he said, would have to draw up its own development plans and formula to promote national unity.

The secret of Malaysia's success, the prime minister added, lay in its ability to forge national unity among people from multi-ethnic and multi-religious groups.

University rector Prof Dr Faruk Caklovica later presented the Golden Pin award – the institution's highest honour – to Abdullah.

Later, Abdullah unveiled a plaque to open the RM1.8 million *Masjid Malaysia* in Nova Breka, funded by the Malaysian Government.

He also presented a symbolic donation of 10,000 euros (RM46,000) by the Malaysian Government to mosque imam Elvedin Klisura before performing Friday prayers.



**Nice to meet you:** Abdullah shaking hands with Bosnia and Herzegovina ulama Mustafa Ceric at the University of Sarajevo yesterday. With them are the Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah and Mustafa's wife Aera (right). — Bernama

## Bosnia invites Malaysian banks

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**SARAJEVO:** Malaysia has been asked to venture into Islamic banking in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to the rising interest in such products and services.

Amer Bukvic of Bosna Bank International, made an impassioned plea to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to encourage Malaysian banks to capitalise on their expertise in Islamic financial banking and invest here.

He said Europe's big financial

groups were slowly moving towards that direction but they did not have the expertise and experience compared with Malaysia.

"This is where Malaysia has the edge. You should move fast to benefit from the increasing interest in Islamic banking," he said during a question and answer session with the Prime Minister during the Malaysia-Bosnia and Herzegovina Business Forum on Thursday.

Apart from Islamic banking, issues

including terrorism, barter trade and even health spa products were raised during Abdullah's dialogue with more than 700 Malaysian and Bosnian businessmen and captains of industry.

Bukvic, who is chief executive officer of the first Islamic bank in Bosnia and Herzegovina said Malaysia was, in fact, indirectly represented in the country as his bank was established by the Islamic Development Bank, whose owners include the Malaysian Government.