

PM: Always ensure peace

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Don't be careless, Malaysians told

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysians have been reminded to always ensure peace and stability because carelessness will destroy the harmony and unity enjoyed by the country all this while, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"If this (destruction) occurs, it will be impossible for us to rebuild it (harmony)," the Prime Minister said in his message in conjunction with the Wesak Day celebrations today.

He said the success achieved by Malaysia today was not coincidental or come on a silver platter but was due to the diligence, determination and solidarity of the people of various races and religions.

"The plural society in Malaysia is a unique feature that has given us the strength to unite," he said.

The prime minister said Malaysia was today regarded as a model state because its people of various religions, cultures and ethnic groups could live in peace and solidarity.

Wishing Buddhists a Happy Wesak Day, the prime minister said he hoped the understanding and unity forged among the people could be enhanced so that the country would contin-

ue to progress in a peaceful manner.

MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said this year's Wesak Day theme - *Religious Harmony, Key to Nation Building* - was significant at a time when the country was commemorating its 50th Merdeka celebrations.

He said maintaining religious harmony was still the main factor in ensuring a stable development of society.

"It is not an easy task to maintain religious harmony in this multi-racial country where people practise different religions.

"However, in the past 50 years, Malaysians of different races have shown the spirit of *Rakyat Malaysia*, where they respect the Federal Constitution that states that Islam is the official religion and at the same time people of other faiths are free to practise their religion," he said in his Wesak Day message.

Ong said Malaysians have shown mutual respect and understanding by staying united and working together to take the country to greater heights.

He also wished Buddhists a Happy Wesak Day.