

Pak Lah underscores unity

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KUALA LUMPUR: It is the current generation's turn to take Malaysia forward and make it a developed nation and in doing so all negative feelings towards one another must be eliminated, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"If we take what has happened in our country, and if we take, for example, what happened in the recent Umno general assembly, it proves how brittle and fragile issues with

religion and race are."

Abdullah said there was no pretending that it did not happen.

"However, it doesn't mean that it does not happen among the Chinese and Indians," Abdullah told a dinner yesterday, attended by top corporate figures to mark the participation of the private sector in promoting the next year's 50th National Day celebrations.

"This then shows how fragile the situation is among the

racess. If it is knocked it might shake, but if it is knocked harder it might break."

He said he did not want this to happen and all efforts had to be taken to ensure that unity among the races was the priority.

"Don't let it look all right from the outside but is not right inside," he said, adding that being contented with such a situation would mean the lack of inner strength to ensure that unity achieved would be

genuine and concrete.

Abdullah said challenges in the future were going to be much tougher and so the strength of all Malaysians regardless of race was needed to overcome them.

He said that in the past race relations were testy but as time went by they went on well.

"But now, as time goes on, there seems to be some reluctance. I'm talking to you frankly, there is no need to hide," he added.

"It is better if we all know, so we can fix this disease. If anything is lacking, then it should be solved together so that there is strength in unity."

Abdullah also called for all programmes to be organised for the upcoming 50th National Day celebrations to include all Malaysians regardless of race.

"For 50 years, that is how we have moved forward.

"Everyone has contributed, whether it is the private or

public sector. This factor has to be considered," he said.

Abdullah added that the younger generation did not understand the struggle of Malaysia's forefathers as they were born into a world that had many more conveniences.

"But it is important that the younger generation understand what happened so that they can use the improved opportunities to do more for the country," he said.