

Malays must be more confident, says Abdullah

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi wants the Malays to be more confident and to shed the fear that has been in their minds since before independence.

"The feeling of fear and apprehension has dominated the thinking of the Malays for far too long.

"It has been a long time. We are scared even after 50 years of independence.

"Among the Malay professionals, there is no fear, but the majority of the Malays are still haunted by fear," the prime minister said in a special interview with *Mingguan Malaysia* published yesterday.

The Umno president said the Malays must realise that they cannot continue to rely on the New Economic Policy or be dependent on government handouts.

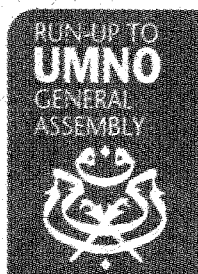
"They must learn to stand on their own feet and learn to be competitive. We will help the Malays who are serious in wanting to do business and to work hard," he said in the interview which was held in conjunction with the Umno general assembly this week.

"I want the Malays to capitalise on the opportunities given to them.

"The government has offered a lot of opportunities, especially in the economic corridor developments.

"They must be bold and take the initiative to seize the opportunities.

"There are no easy ways to succeed in life. Only the educated, the



knowledgeable and the hard-working will succeed."

Abdullah said it was a long and drawn-out process to change the minds of human beings, and added: "I've said many times Malays are not stupid or weak."

On views that there were differences between the Malay leadership in world-class government-linked companies and the second echelon leadership in Umno, the prime minister said:

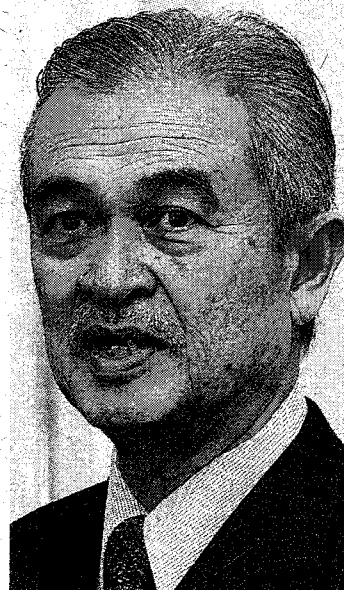
"The Malays are fond of making announcements. They are like the proverbial chicken that, after laying one egg, announces it to the whole village.

"The turtle lays its eggs quietly. When we come to know about it, the turtle already has many hatchlings. We need to talk less and work more."

Abdullah said he disagreed with the view that Umno's second echelon leadership was not dynamic.

He said many of them were people of calibre and potential.

"I firmly believe the second echelon leaders have the zeal to propel Umno towards excellence,



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Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi
Prime Minister

provided they are well prepared for the challenges ahead.”

On his leadership style, Abdullah said:

"My style is to shut my ears when someone speaks nonsense. I prefer to focus on my work rather than entertaining unconstructive talk."

And, with regard to negative perceptions about the Malay agenda, Abdullah said they arose

from a lack of understanding.

"But I say it takes strong and bold leaders to allow others to talk. It takes bold leaders to forgive and forget and to give somebody a second chance."

On this year's Umno general assembly, Abdullah said Umno must show through the motions that were tabled that the party's struggles were for all races. — Bernama