

Think as Malaysians, Abdullah urges students

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IPOH: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi wants students to start thinking as Malaysians, not as Malays, Chinese or Indians.

He said it did not matter whether they went to Chinese, Tamil or national schools, they were, above all, Malaysian.

Speaking to parents and students of SMJK(C) and SJK(C) Sam Tet here yesterday, Abdullah said students must be taught to realise and start thinking from a young age that they were Malaysians.

"Teachers play an important role. Given the diverse racial backgrounds of their students, they must ensure that the spirit of muhibah and the need to be tolerant are ingrained in all students.

"Students must be made to understand that the government's aim has always been to strive for the preservation and unity of all the races," he said.

Admitting that maintaining the balance between the races had not been easy, Abdullah said students must learn to think how their actions would affect others and why they should not limit their thinking to their race alone.

"We want our next generation — the would-be administrators, academics, entrepreneurs — to understand that this is the path the government has chosen. We want unity and prosperity for all our races," he said, adding that the country's progress thus far had been due to the contributions of not one, but all the races.

This, he said, was the future envisioned by the country's forefa-



Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his wife, Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah, being greeted by parents, students and teachers of SMJK Sam Tet and SJK Sam Tet yesterday.

thers — Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Tan Siew Sin and Tun V.T. Sambanthan — who wanted the people of all races to live together in harmony and prosperity.

Citing another example, Abdullah said, "even in the cabinet, there is no such thing as race-based 'gangs' or 'cliques', and that no matter how sensitive an issue might be, it would be discussed by all the ministers".

"Of course, there are bound to be some raised voices, but it is all in the spirit of discussion. There are no feelings of animosity, just respect for the views of their countrymen.

"Whatever is decided from such discussions will, without question, bring benefit to all Malaysians."

Also present were Housing and Local Government Minister and MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali, Deputy Education Minister Datuk Noh Omar and Perak state secretary Datuk Abdul Rahman Hashim.

Abdullah, accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah, was in Perak on a two-day visit. Earlier, the prime minister launched the administrative and commercial complex in Gugusan Manjoi, a Malay settlement comprising five traditional villages with a population of 40,000.

The villages are Kampung Manjoi, Sungai Tapah, Dato' Ahmad Said, Tengku Hussein and Jelapang Baru.

In his speech to the people of Manjoi, Abdullah said the government would continue to provide and build infrastructure facilities.

Tajol Rosli said the Perak government was charging only a RM10 fee for landowners in Gugusan Manjoi to convert their land from residential to commercial use.

He said the offer was effective immediately until Oct 21 next year. It was aimed at encouraging Manjoi residents to become entrepreneurs and to help develop Gugusan Manjoi into a commercially productive zone.

Tajol Rosli, however, said the state government would not allow the selling of land on a large scale, adding that it should remain in the hands of the Manjoi community.