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PM: Nation's interest must always be first

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PUTRAJAYA: The spirit of caring and sharing has always kept the nation together whenever its unity was tested, the prime minister said.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said in his Christmas message that for the country to continue moving forward strongly, it was paramount for the people to always put the country's interest before other narrowly defined demands.

Malaysia, he said, had for the

past 50 years enjoyed the peace that prevailed due to sheer hard work and the strong sense of responsibility of its people.

However, he said, some had in recent times tried to instigate unrest.

"Over the last few months, narrow-mindedness and intolerance, propounded by a small group, have served to test our faith in each other.

"Therefore, in celebrating Christmas today, I am happy to note that Malaysians of all faiths continue the tradition of sharing and caring, a tradition that

we have practised all these years.

"Despite all the rhetoric, the great religions of the world practised across Malaysia share many universal beliefs.

"None is more evident than our central belief in the power of love and compassion," Abdullah said.

He said Malaysia had indeed seen over the years how love and compassion had helped to break down racial barriers and it had also helped the less fortunate and marginalised.

"In moving forward, we must

all believe that Malaysia is truly greater than the sum of her parts."

Abdullah said it was in this spirit, as the people celebrate Christmas, that their thoughts must also go out to the unfortunate and all those who face hardship at this time, such as the flood victims.

"Let us lend a helping hand to those who have to spend this festive season in great adversity.

"Lastly, let me take this opportunity to wish my fellow Malaysians of the Christian faith a very happy Christmas."

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