

THE STAR

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Hindraf wants to destroy country: Abdullah

KUANTAN: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday labelled those who solicit support from outsiders as traitors, and the action of the Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf), which claimed to fight for the rights of the Indian community in Malaysia, as an attempt to destroy the country and racial unity.

"This is a betrayal of our country. Was there ethnic cleansing? There was nothing about wiping out the Indians in the country," Abdullah said on his arrival for a one-day visit to Pahang.

He said the Barisan Nasional-led government always listened to the views of the people, which were conveyed through the proper channels

like the elected representatives, associations, non-governmental organisations and certain committees.

When he left the Subang air force base earlier, Abdullah said those who defame the country overseas were people who did not love their country.

"The people are also angry at those who go overseas to seek support and cook up baseless allegations. Actually they don't love the country. They only hunger for power and don't care about what happens to the country," he said after receiving a memorandum from the Damai Malaysia group opposing street demonstrations.

Abdullah, who is also the internal security minister, said those who were obsessed with

their views did not care about the consequences of their acts.

"We are the ones who have to face everything. We have to defend the peace and well-being of the people," he said.

Damai Malaysia, a group of NGOs, submitted a five-page memorandum from 395 NGOs, which jointly rejected street demonstrations and called on the government to act sternly against the culprits.

Abdullah said Malaysia had become developed and successful based on the practice of democracy, which respected and upheld the law and constitution.

Malaysia still gave the people the freedom to voice their opinions, including in the mass media,

he said. If this freedom is used in an irresponsible manner, the people will suffer.

He said the recent street demonstrations caused various sectors, especially the tourism and business sectors, to suffer losses.

He was told hotels in Bukit Bintang received cancellation for 10% of their room reservations and that tour agencies and bus operators also received cancellations.

The memorandum, submitted by Damai Malaysia coordinating chairman Mohd Sai-ful Adil Mohd Daud, contained a declaration condemning the organisation of any street demonstration and rejecting discussions on sensitive issues like race and religion through this means. - Bernama