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Abdullah: Mutual respect key to peace, prosperity

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday called on Malaysians to uphold the spirit of consensus, tolerance, solidarity and mutual respect among the various races as key to the country's peace and prosperity.

In his Chinese New Year message, the prime minister said Malaysians were fortunate that the festivals of the various ethnic groups and faiths could be celebrated in a harmonious environment.

"If we look around, there are not many countries with multi-racial communities like ours which are able to enjoy what we have.

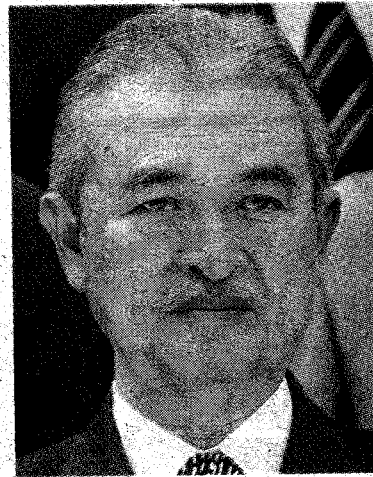
"We must acknowledge that the stability we have achieved in the country was not attained easily. It was not without effort and sacrifice. We must appreciate that it was achieved through the solidarity and unity which we have forged all this time," he said.

Abdullah said Malaysia did not belong to any particular individual or community but to all Malaysians.

He said 2008 is a meaningful

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*Datuk Seri Abdullah
Ahmad Badawi*



year as it was the first year after Malaysia commemorated its 50th anniversary of independence.

He said the government took great pride in having moved forward and achieved much success in only 50 years.

However, he said Malaysians

should not be complacent with the country's achievements but continue to strive to meet the challenges of global competition.

"In order to progress further, we must have all the prerequisites so that we will continue to be competitive and resilient.

"We must continue to equip ourselves with all the necessary attributes so that we can face all the challenges and obstacles with confidence."

Abdullah said the government had provided various foundations needed to face the long-term challenges.

He said the regional economic corridors together with the development projects under the Ninth Malaysia Plan would bring quicker and balanced development which would benefit more people in both urban and rural areas.

Abdullah said that as prime minister he was committed to creating a Malaysian society that was dynamic and progressive, living in peace and harmony and strongly upholding Malaysian cultural traditions.

"I will continue to redouble efforts so that we can continue to move forward and gain the respect of the international community in all aspects," he added.

He ended his message by wishing all Malaysians a Happy Chinese New Year. — Bernama