

Racial integration our cornerstone

PM: It's to promote peace, prosperity

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SEREMBAN, Tues. — The Prime Minister had a sober message for parents and teachers today.

If Malaysia is to remain a peaceful and prosperous country, children of different races must eat, live and play together, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He said that parents had to understand that racial integration was the cornerstone of the country's success.

Teachers had to make sure that integration was the main thrust of the education system.

Parents should teach their children that they are living in a multi-racial country and must learn to interact and live peacefully with other races.

"If parents themselves keep their children from mingling with children of other races, this united, peaceful environment that we live in now will not last forever.

"Children of various races must learn to eat, live and play together for the future progress of the nation," he said at the launch of the Student's Integration Plan for Unity (RIMUP) in Mantin here.

He also launched a Integration Guidebook for Students today.

Integration and unity was something which has been fought for by the nation's leaders over the years and it was the duty of the present and future generation to preserve this, he said.

"If there is no unity, there will be fights and misunderstandings, which in turn will lead to a drop in foreign investments and an overall

drop in the country's economy.

He said there should be more activities and programmes to enable children of different races to mix more freely.

RIMUP is a programme which encourages co-operation between students of national and vernacular schools in sports, co-curriculum activities and information communication technology.

The activities are done outside school hours and schools will take turns organising them.

It has four objectives — to encourage teachers and students from pre-school to pre-university to participate in these activities; to instill a sense of co-operation, understanding and awareness among the students; help create tolerance among the various races; and to learn how to share.