

Pak Lah: Be a caring society

The Star - 5/7/2007.

Help the poor regardless of their race and religion, PM tells Malaysians

By JANE RITIKOS
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Be a caring society. Do not think twice about doing charity for the poor, regardless of their race and creed.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi made this plea to all Malaysians to help the Government wipe out poverty in the country.

The Prime Minister wants everyone to progress together.

"I am proud to see, throughout the nation, people of all races and religions, who show a caring attitude towards those who are less fortunate than them.

"When giving charity, they do not think of the poor in terms of race or religion.

"They give whatever they can, whether the amount is big or small.

"I would like this to continue to be a part of the Malaysian attitude," he said at the Poverty Eradication Foundation (Yayasan Basmi Kemiskinan) dinner here last night.

The Prime Minister also launched a fund-raising drive for the foundation's special children's education centre.

Abdullah said the fight against poverty had always been a serious matter for the Government.

"This is reflected in the poverty level, which has significantly reduced from over 60% of the popu-



lation at the time of Independence to 5.7% of the people at present," he said.

"The Government's poverty eradication policy has always disregarded race and religious factors," he said, adding that the country's achieve-

ment was recognised by the United Nation's Millennium Development Report that named Malaysia as the best country in efforts to eradicate poverty.

"We will continue to wipe out poverty.

"Our aim is zero hardcore poor people by 2010 and I hope we can achieve this together," he said.

Abdullah presented the foundation's first award to a personality who had championed the cause of eradicating poverty.

The award, Anugerah Tokoh Basmi Kemiskinan YAB Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Yayasan Basmi Kemiskinan, was given to Rural and Regional Development Ministry advisor Datuk Paduka Rahmah Abu Kassim.

Written in history

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi admiring a replica of the Parker pen used by Tunku Abdul Rahman to sign his name on the Declaration of Independence 50 years ago. Abdullah received the replica - one of 50 limited editions that the Parker company produced to mark the nation's 50th National Day - at his office in Putrajaya yesterday. Each pen costs RM2,007 and all of them have since been sold. Parker brand director (International) Richard Wessler (centre) and South-East Asia regional general manager Danny Yong (left) presented the pen which is inscribed with the number '50'.

— Bernama