DPM: Respect each other

By NICK LEONG

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia can achieve higher growth if all the races are respectful towards each other, says Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He said the Government had already predicted a growth rate of 6% for the country next year, above the 4% expected this year.

"We must bear in mind that in everything we do, we have to respect people from other races. If we can live together in peace and harmony, we will prosper together," he said, when opening the Bukit Bintang MCA Lantern Festival here on Friday night.

Also present were Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir and MCA deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said the Barisan Nasional Government was leading by example by distributing its resources fairly among various groups.

He said Budget 2003 paid close attention to groups like women, the elderly, and the poor.

Chua, who is an MCA vice-president, said the festival had drawn 60,000 people to the event.

He said the festival, which is in its sixth year, had also managed to attract a lot of tourists to the city centre.

The festival entered the Malaysia Book of Records when a team of 12 chefs created the longest moon cake in the world, measuring 548.64m.

The moon cake, which required 682kg of lotus seeds, 88kg of glutinous rice flour, and 146kg of sugar to make, was then cut into 30,000 pieces and sold for RM4 per piece.

The proceeds will be donated to charity.

OFFICIAL LAUNCH ... Abdullah carrying a lantern during the launch of the lantern festival in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, as (from left) Chua, Lim, Kadir and Kadir's wife Datin Suraya Mohd Noh look on.