

KUALA LUMPUR, NOV. 30 (BERNAMA) - (P) DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD REVEALED TODAY THAT A CERTAIN GROUP OF PEOPLE HAD BEEN SMEARING THE IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY AND GOVERNMENT BY GIVING MISLEADING INFORMATION TO MUSLIMS IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND URGING THEM TO CRITICISE THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT.

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT AS A RESULT OF SUCH ACTIVITIES THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT HAD RECEIVED TELEGRAMS FROM UNKNOWN SOURCES AND THIS IN TURN HAD DAMAGED THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND OTHER MUSLIM COUNTRIES.

OPENING THE EXPO PEMBANGUNAN ISLAM TO MARK THE 15TH CENTURY HIJRIH AT THE STADIUM NEGARA HERE, HE SAID SUCH ACTIVITIES WERE THE SOURCE OF THE WEAKNESS OF MUSLIMS AND MUSLIM COUNTRIES TODAY.

"AS LONG AS WE DO NOT WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS FACT WE WILL REMAIN WEAK AND BE DOMINATED BY OTHERS," HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID ISLAM FORBADE ITS FOLLOWERS TO INDULGE IN SLANDER AS IT WAS MORE DANGEROUS THAN KILING.

"BUT, SLANDER HAS BECOME A PRACTICE AMONG THOSE WHO ARE OUT TO SMEAR THE GOOD IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY AND GOVERNMENT BY GIVING FALSE INFORMATION TO OTHER MUSLIMS," HE SAID.

---BERNAMA MORE HM

NO18 (F)
MAHATHIR-EXPO 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID THE MUSLIMS COULD SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS LIKE OTHER PEOPLE, BUT "WHAT WEAKENS US IS THAT THERE ARE THOSE AMONG US WHO MAKE THEIR OWN INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM FOR THEIR OWN ENDS AND TO PROJECT THEIR OWN INFLUENCE, AND THEY CONSIDER ISLAM NOTHING MORE THAN A SET OF LAWS GOVERNING THE AMPUTATION OF ARMS, STONING AND BEHEADING."

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE EXPO WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ITS PURPOSE IF AFTER VISITING IT, A PERSON WOULD RETURN TO THE TRUE TEACHINGS THAT HAD MADE ISLAM A POWER WHICH HAD REPLACED IGNORANCE WITH KNOWLEDGE AND MODERATION.

HE SAID THE MUSLIMS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE SHACKLED AS LONG AS THEY DEPENDED ON OTHER PEOPLE'S AID WHENEVER THEY WERE ATTACKED.

"AS LONG AS WE ARE NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE OURSELVES WITH WEAPONS COMPARABLE TO THOSE OF OUR ENEMIES, SO LONG AS WE ARE FORCED TO BEG FOR ASSISTANCE WHENEVER WE ARE THREATENED, THOSE WHO HELP US WILL CONTROL OUR ACTIONS," HE SAID.

NO19 (F) ---BERNAMA MORE HM 1503
MAHATHIR -EXPO 3 KUALA LUMPUR

THE MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT, DATUK HAJI MOHAMAD NASIR, REMINDED MUSLIMS THAT IGNORANCE WAS THEIR GREATEST ENEMY.

IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT ISLAM REQUIRED THEM TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE OF WORLDLY AND SPIRITUAL MATTERS, HE SAID.

ONLY WITH KNOWLEDGE COULD A MAN IDENTIFY HIS GOD CLEARLY AND ACHIEVE A HIGH DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT.

HE ALSO CALLED ON MUSLIMS TO COOPERATE FOR UNITY AND PEACE AMONG FELLOW BELIEVERS AND TO ESTABLISH BETTER RAPPOPT WITH RELIGIOUS TEACHERS.

DATUK HAJI MOHAMAD URGED GROUPS, ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIETIES NOT TO CREATE CONFUSION REGARDS FAITH JUST BECAUSE THEY HAD MIS-UNDERSTANDINGS AMONG THEMSELVES.

THE EXPO, HE SAID, WAS ONE ACTIVITY WHICH COULD PROMOTE UNITY.

A TOTAL OF 167 STALLS ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE TWO-WEEK EXPO.

---BERNAMA HM 1512