

0711

U E271 AAE

MAHATHIR-RELIGION R R R R

BM

KELANA JAYA, NOV 23 (BERNAMA) -- MORE ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO CHECKING DEVIATIONIST ISLAMIC TEACHINGS IN THE COUNTRY TO ENSURE THAT THE PROBLEM DOES NOT REACH A CRITICAL LEVEL, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

+IF WE DO NOT GIVE ATTENTION, THE PROBLEM MAY WORSEN AND BECOME CRITICAL AND WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING,+ THE PRIME MINISTER SAID WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON DEVIATIONIST TEACHINGS AND STEPS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM.

HE WAS SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER OPENING THE FIFTH ULAMAS CONFERENCE AT THE TABUNG HAJI COMPLEX HERE.

EARLIER, IN HIS ADDRESS AT THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE, HE HAD TOUCHED ON THE DEVIATIONIST TEACHINGS PROBLEM BUT DID NOT IDENTIFY ANY GROUPS. HE ALSO DECLINED TO IDENTIFY ANY GROUPS WHEN ASKED BY REPORTERS.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT ACT ON SUCH MATTERS UNLESS RELIGIOUS GROUPS THEMSELVES WERE AWARE OF THE PROBLEM AND TAKE STEPS TO OVERCOME IT. -- MORE

143108T 23 11 88

U E273 AAE

MAHATHIR-RELIGION 2 KELANA JAYA R R R R

HE SAID THAT MUSLIMS WERE SUSCEPTIBLE TO DEVIATIONIST TEACHINGS BECAUSE THEY EASILY ACCEPTED PEOPLE AS ULAMAS.

+WHILE WE ADMIT AND ACCEPT THAT ULAMAS HAD A HIGH STANDING IN SOCIETY, WE CANNOT EASILY ACCEPT ANYONE AS ULAMAS WHO CLAIM THEY ARE INAM MAHADI OR HIS FRIEND OR CAN MEET WITH THE PROPHET,+ HE SAID.

+MUSLIMS SHOULD BE WARY OF PEOPLE CLAIMING TO BE ULAMAS,+ HE SAID.

HE HIT OUT AT GROUPS WHICH MADE USE OF RELIGION FOR CERTAIN INTERESTS.

+AS THE RELIGION SAVED THEM FROM CRITICISM, THEY HAVE NOW BECOME SO ARRAGANT THAT THEY CLAIM TO MORE CAPABLE IN ADMINISTERING RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTRY,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

13108T 23 11 88

U E286 AAE
MAHATHIR-RELIGION 3 KELANA JAYA R R R R

THESE GROUPS INTERPRETED ISLAM ACCORDING TO THEIR NEEDS SO MUCH SO THAT THE FAITH OF THEIR MEMBERS WAS DEVIATED, HE SAID.

HE SAID THEY ALSO BECAME ARROGANT OVER THEIR SUCCESS IN INFLUENCING GROUPS, ESPECIALLY THE WOMEN. THEIR INFLUENCE EXTENDED TO STUDENTS WHOSE STUDIES WERE ALSO AFFECTED, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID WHILE THE GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP WORKED TOWARDS MAINTAINING MUSLIM UNITY, THESE GROUPS PROJECTED ISSUES WHICH DIVIDED THE PEOPLE CENTURIES AGO, LIKE THOSE PERTAINING TO DOOMSDAY AND THE EMERGENCE OF IMAM MAHADI.

THESE ISSUES COULD NOT BE RESOLVED BY ANYONE AND HISTORY HAD PROVEN THAT THEIR MISUNDERSTANDING HAMPED THE FAITH AND DISUNITED THE PEOPLE, HE SAID.

+THE DOWNFALL OF MUSLIMS IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES ON MANY OCCASIONS WAS DUE TO CLAIMS BY CERTAIN PEOPLE THAT THEY WERE PRIVY TO CERTAIN INFORMATION,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

1553HST 25 11 88

U E296 AAE
MAHATHIR-RELIGION 4 KELANA JAYA R R R R

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID ULAMAS SHOULD ENHANCE THE UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIETY THAT A STRONG ISLAMIC BELIEF WAS THE BASIS FOR GENUINE FAITH.

+EVERY MUSLIM SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE ELEMENTS OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS SO THAT THEY ARE NOT EASILY INFLUENCED BY DEVIATIONIST AND FALSE TEACHINGS,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO TOUCHED ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF ULAMAS IN THE PAST, PARTICULARLY DURING THE COLONIAL ERA.

+THEIR ROLE WAS VERY EFFECTIVE THEN SO MUCH SO NOT ONE MALAY RENOUNCED ISLAM DURING THAT PERIOD,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT ULAMAS AND RELIGIOUS TEACHERS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE SPREAD ISLAMIC TEACHINGS NOT TO SEEK INFLUENCE, POPULARITY OR SELF GAINS.

THEY GAVE PRIORITY TO DISCHARGING THEIR DUTIES SINCERELY, AND ALWAYS AVOIDED MATTERS WHICH COULD CREATE CONFUSION IN SOCIETY, HE SAID. -- MORE

1613HST 25 11 88

U E306 AAE
MAHATHIR-RELIGION 5 KELANA JAYA R R R R

+ULAMAS OF THE PAST DID NOT EMPHASISE ON DRESSING, SUCH AS WEARING HEADGEAR, ROBES AND VEIL, OR IMAM MAHADI OR POLYSA^{RY} AS A SIGN OF ISLAM,+ HE SAID.

+THE PEOPLE EASILY ACCEPTED WHAT WAS SAID BY THE ULAMAS AT THAT TIME BECAUSE THEY TAUGHT ISLAM BASED ON ONE INTERPRETATION WHICH WAS NOT CONTRADICTIONARY,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT ANOTHER ROLE OF THE ULAMAS IN THE OLDEN DAYS WHICH SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTED WAS THEIR EFFORT TO INSTIL THE PATRIOTIC SPIRIT AMONG THE PEOPLE AND ALSO THE SPIRIT TO SEEK INDEPENDENCE.

ABOUT 100 ULAMAS ARE ATTENDING THE THREE-DAY CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY THE MALAYSIAN ISLAMIC MISSIONARY FOUNDATION (YADIM). ALSO PRESENT WAS MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT DATUK DR YUSOF MOOR AND EDUCATION MINISTER ENCIK ANWAR IBRAHIM. -- BERMAHA
1639HST 25 11 88