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MAHATHIR URGES MUSLIMS TO ACQUIRE EXPERTISE IN ALL FIELDS

Mahathir - message

(Embargo: For use after PM delivers speech over radio,-tv tonight)

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KUALA LUMPUR, April 4 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight called on Muslims to work **harder and step up** productivity for progress in this world and happiness in the hereafter.

They must acquire knowledge and expertise in all fields to achieve progress, he said in his Hari Raya message. Hari Raya Puasa will be celebrated tomorrow.

+This is also in line with our aspiration to make Malaysia a developed nation by the year 2020,+ he said, adding that in doing so they should not neglect efforts to seek happiness in the hereafter.

Dr Mahathir said that in a modern and competitive world, Muslims should redouble their efforts for progress in all fields.

+We do not want to see Muslims left behind as a result of pursuing happiness only for the hereafter,+ he added. -- more

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Mahathir - message 2 Kuala Lumpur (embargo)

He expressed regret that some groups of Muslims had neglected their responsibilities in this world in preference for happiness in the hereafter.

These people created all sorts of +ibadat+ (religious teachings and practices) which could have a negative effect on the society, he said.

The Prime Minister also said that if the majority of Muslims neglected their normal duties and got involved in these teachings and practices, the entire society would become weak and be easily exploited by others.

On the economy., he said Malaysia had succeeded in achieving an encouraging growth rate and in controlling the rate of inflation and unemployment.

The steady economic growth enabled the people to enjoy a high standard of living, and government servants were able to benefit from a new salary scheme because of the strong financial position of the country, he said. -- more

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Mahathir - message 3 (last) Kuala Lumpur (embargo)

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians were fortunate compared with people in some other countries which did not even have the basic amenities such as electricity and water. Even in some developed countries, there were homeless and jobless people who had to be supported by welfare homes, he added.

In some countries, Muslims were oppressed to the extent that they were unable to carry-out their religious practices, he said.

Dr Mahathir also urged road users to be more careful during the festival as 9.0 per cent of road accidents were the result of human error.

He called on non-Muslims to visit their Muslim friends during the Hari Raya.

The Prime Minister wished all Muslims a +Selamat Hari Raya+ and said he hoped that they would be showered with the blessings of God. -- Bernama

▼04/04/11-59MST