

CNS0773

R GE 04-01 00208 EF440

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Mahathir-assembly

Embargo: for release at 10pm today

DR MAHATHIR WANTS OTHER ISLAMIC COUNTRIES TO EMULATE MALAYSIA

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KANGAR, Jan 4 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister wants Malaysia and its Muslim population to be the model for other Islamic countries and Muslims throughout the world by proving that Islam is a religion for success in this world and the hereafter.

Dr Mahathir said that to achieve this objective, Muslims in the country should cast aside narrow views and interpretations on religious obligations, the contents of the Quran, the hadis and sunnah.

+What caused us to be backward and looked down is not the Quran and the hadis but interpretations made by certain people with self interest,+ he said when opening the 35th national-level Quran reciters assembly here tonight.

He said that the attitude of Muslims in Malaysia was not far different from the attitude of Muslims in other countries because there were still groups striving to spread anti-progressive teachings if there were efforts made towards achieving progress.

However, he was proud that Malaysia was still able to be a model to third world countries although such groups were actively pursuing their objectives. -- more

▼04/01/21-44MST

CNS0774

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Mahathir-assembly 2 Kangar (Embargo)

The Prime Minister said that this could be seen through the visits of leaders of other countries to learn how Malaysia develop the country.

On Malaysia's efforts to become a developed country by the year 2020, he said that by having a vision alone was inadequate to ensure success without giving priority to certain characteristics like determination and honesty and other moral values.

For the purpose, Dr Mahathir said that Muslims in the country should emulate the Prophet Muhammad who was honest and determined to ensure the success of his business and trade.

Only by possessing such characteristics could the Muslims in the country be able to participate in the development process and be a progressive race and be on par with the other races and communities.

+As such, the image of Islam and Muslims would be restored.+ -- more

▼04/01/21-45MST

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Mahathir-assembly 3 Kangar (Embargo)

He said that Muslims who were backward in worldly knowledge which were stressed by Islam just like the knowledge for the hereafter, may not bring progress to Islam.

In line with the theme of the assembly, +Vision for the Advancement of the Ummah+, Dr Mahathir said that Muslims in Malaysia should strive to adhere to the true teachings of Islam which demands that Muslims pursue progress in the world and happiness in the hereafter.

+Vision 2020 which will make Malaysians a progressive race is in line with the teachings of Islam.

+What is demanded is progress in knowledge, efficiency and capability to manage wealth so that we can protect Islam from being despised as is being seen now,+ he said.

The Prime Minister expressed regret that Muslims in the country were still weak from the aspect of acquiring knowledge especially in the fields of trade, manufacturing, science and technology although they were aware that these were essential for the development of the country and to achieve the objectives of Vision 2020. -- more

▼04/01/21-46MST

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Mahathir-assembly 4 Kangar (Embargo)

As such, he stressed the importance for Muslims not only to be consumers but also strive to be inventors and producers of various life's essentials to avoid being exploited by suppliers.

Dr Mahathir regretted that there were still many Muslims who believe that poor people have stronger faith than the rich and any effort to bring progress to Muslims in the world was regarded as unimportant and against the religion.

+It is not surprising then that we found in the world not a Muslim community or Muslim nation who is progressive in the economic aspects or efficient in the manufacturing field or in marketing.+

If at all they were rich, it was because of their natural resources and they had to depend on others to exploit the resources and manage them.

+More often than not, the wealth is used in conflicts among themselves,+ he said. -- more

▼04/01/21-46MST

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Mahathir-assembly 5 Kangar (Embargo)

On the Quranic seminar held in conjunction with the assembly, the Prime Minister said that it was important to delve the contents of the Quran and to strengthen the conviction of the ummah through the true teachings in their day to day life.

He said that the effort was necessary to correct negative interpretations made in the past.

He reminded Muslims that the Quran which was correctly interpreted would not prevent progress of the Muslims.

? As such, he hoped that all Muslims would make the Quran and the sunnah as their guide in life. -- more

▼04/01/21-47MST

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Mahathir-assembly 6 (last) Kangar (Embargo)

Public Enterprises Minister Datuk Dr Yusoff Noor, in his speech, said that Muslims should be sensitive to changes in all fields in order to progress in line with the wishes of Islam.

Dr Yusoff, who is the chairman of the Quranic reciters assembly organising committee, said that Muslims should not be afraid of changes as a change was a key to success.

Perlis Menteri Besar Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh, in his speech, said that the government and the people of Perlis were proud that Perlis had been chosen to be the host of the national-level Quranic reciters assembly.

A total of 27 qari and qariah will take part in the five-day assembly. Kelantan is represented by a qari.

Last year's champions, Haji Mohamad Awang Teh (qari) of Terengganu and Puan Hajah Rahmas binti Abdullah (qariah) of Johor are not taking part in this year's assembly. -- Bernama