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Mahathir-Sabah

DR MAHATHIR PREPARED TO MEET SABAH UMNO DELEGATION

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KUALA TERENGGANU, Sept. 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister <sup>93</sup> ~~Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad~~ said today he was prepared to meet Sabah UMNO division leaders who were said to be dissatisfied with the leadership of Ghafar Baba as the state UMNO liasion chief.

He added, however, that he had yet to be officially informed of the desire by leaders of 19 of the 20 divisions in the state and that he only read what was reported in the newspapers.

Speaking to reporters after opening the Islamic Civilisation Expo here, Dr Mahathir, who is UMNO President, said he had no idea what the group of leaders wanted to convey to him if it was really true that they wanted to meet him.

The Overseas Chinese Daily, Chinese Daily News and Sin Chew Jit Poh reported from Kota Kinabalu that the division leaders wanted Ghafar, who is Deputy Prime Minister, to be replaced with a local leader who was more qualified.

Semporna UMNO division head Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai was reported to have been chosen to lead the group to meet Dr Mahathir. -- more

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Mahathir-Sabah 2 Kuala Terengganu

In his opening speech, Dr Mahathir reminded Muslims to refrain from separating religious knowledge from other fields of knowledge as it would only weaken their culture and civilisation.

As example, he cited the collapse of the Christian civilisation of old due to the attempt by authorities to separate religious knowledge from other educational knowledge because they feared the influence of the clerics.

This spread to Islamic government and led to the deterioration of the Islamic civilisation, particularly in the 19th century and early 20th century.

He said Muslims must be diligent in advancing Islam in all fields and when they had achieved progress they would command the respect of non-Muslims, the first step in their acceptance of the religion.

Malaysia was prepared to seek deeper knowledge from other Muslim countries and this was why Islamic artisans from Isfahan, Iran, which followed the Shiite practice, were brought to the country to transfer their skills, he added. -- more

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Mahathir-Sabah 3 (last) Kuala Terengganu

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would continue to bring Islamic experts from other Muslim countries to learn their knowledge and skills because the country considered all knowledge in Muslim countries as an asset to be shared by all Muslims.

Earlier, speaking to about 200 government department heads and community leaders during lunch at the Menteri Besar's residence, he urged politicians and administrators to co-operate in the interest of continued development.

It was their joint responsibility to work together to ensure that the administration was not jeopardised, he said.

He also stressed the importance of administrative efficiency which needed to be upgraded to manage the country's resources.

"The mere existence of rich resources does not make a country rich. It must have efficiency and skill to utilise it," he said. -- Bernama

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