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Mahathir - Moral

ATTACKS ON MORAL VALUES WILL ESCALATE, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysians should maintain their high moral values in order to sustain present achievements as attacks on their moral fibre would escalate in the years ahead.

He said such attacks had caused great nations to decline and in the end fall from their pre-eminent position.

"This is due to their disregard for the ethical and moral values which built their society in the first place," he said at the conclusion of the first "International Malaysian Students Conference on Vision 2020" at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) here.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians would have to face the same situation because it had happened to most of the developed societies and most civilisations in the past.

"We cannot allow this to happen to us. Our achievements would be empty if we do," he said. -- more

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Dr Mahathir, who defined the nine challenges of Vision 2020 in his speech, spent time to explain the fourth challenge of the vision -- to establish a fully moral and ethical society, whose citizens are strong in religious and spiritual values and imbued with the highest of ethical standards -- to the participants of the five-day conference which ended today.

About 100 Malaysian students studying in overseas and local universities attended the conference.

The Prime Minister said Vision 2020 was not just an economic vision but also a social, psychological and cultural vision.

"We believe in establishing a fully caring and sharing society, one that is ferociously dynamic but not rapacious. We want a society with a human face and a big human heart," he added.

He said the government also want to build a mature, liberal and tolerant society in which Malaysians of all colours and creeds were free to practise and profess their customs, cultures and religious beliefs and still felt they belonged to one nation. -- more

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In winding up his explanation on Vision 2020, Dr Mahathir said the vision set out two political challenges that formed the most basic objective of creating national unity.

First, he said, was to foster and develop a mature democratic society which practised consensual and community-oriented Malaysian democracy that could be a model for many developing countries.

Second was to establish a fully united Malaysian nation with a sense of shared destiny, a nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony and in full and fair partnership, made up of one Malaysian nation with political loyalty and dedication to the nation.

"Of all the central objectives set out in Vision 2020, we would be foolish to forget that national unity is the most fundamental, the sine qua non, the most basic of our objective," he added.

The Prime Minister said: "There is much to be done and accomplished in the 312 months to 2020. To achieve what must be achieved will require the mobilisation of the entire Malaysian people."

Dr Mahathir then answered 13 questions from the floor in a closed-door dialogue session which lasted more than an hour. -- Bernama

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