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Mahathir-religion

RELIGION NOT NEGLECTED IN STRUGGLES TO ATTAIN DEVELOPED NATION STATUS

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BUKIT KAYU HITAM (Kedah), Jan 28 (Bernama) -- The government has never neglected spiritual and religious development in the midst of the country's rapid progress towards attaining developed nation status by the year 2020, Prime Minister Datuk Seri (Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said that although allocations had been made for other developments, the government had never neglected to set up mosques, surau and other places of worship.

"Having faith in religion is something that is given priority by the government because we know that many developed countries have been destroyed as a result of being too pre-occupied with material wealth and neglecting religion," he said at the laying of the foundation stone of Masjid Bandar Bukit Kayu Hitam, about 60km from Alor Setar.

He said that because of religious neglect, many of these countries were now facing problems especially in the decline in values and moral decay to the extent that they no longer uphold the institution of marriage and the family and have no respect for parents and the elders.

"We believe that sooner or later their society will be destroyed because they do not observe noble values," he said. -- more

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Mahathir-religion 2 Bukit Kayu Hitam

In this respect, he reminded Muslims not to be easily taken up by trivial matters until they lose sight of more important religious issues.

He said there were people who went around telling children that they were not supposed to laugh or sing, claiming they were prohibited by the religion, while at the same time in places like Bosnia-Herzegovina Muslims were killed and tortured with such cruelty but fellow Muslims were helpless to save them and in fact had to plea for help from other parties.

Dr Mahathir also said that Muslims in the country did not even know how to build a mosque and had to seek help from others.

He said that Muslims should have the knowledge and capability not only to build their own houses of worship but also weapons to defend themselves.

If Muslims continue to be poor, weak and dwarfed, there would come a time when they would reject the religion due to frustration as had been shown by history, he said. -- more

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The RM1.26 million mosque, which can accommodate 1,400 people, is expected to be completed in October.

The project was approved by the Prime Minister in 1992 to replace a surau which is being used by about 2,000 people in the area to perform Friday prayer.

Among those present were the Prime Minister's wife, Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali and Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff. -- Bernama

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