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Mahathir - Islam

ECONOMIC STRENGTH IS VITAL FOR MALAYSTA'S FREEDOM - MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 10⁹⁴ (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said economic strength, modern skills and sound knowledge in all fields are necessary to ensure Malaysia remains really free and independent.

He said the government frequently spoke about economic growth not because it was absorbed in materialism or greedy of worldly riches but merely to stress on the need to have wide knowledge and to be advanced in the fields of administration, business and modern enterprise.

"Only with all these will we and our religion be respected," he said in a message on the occasion of Ma'al Hijrah tomorrow.

He said if Malaysians were weak and did not have knowledge and were not efficient, "we will still be subjected to colonialism which will not be very different from the colonialism of the past."

"Hence our aim in Malaysia is to her really and truly independent," he said. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said the time had come for the followers of Islam to have all round knowledge to preserve themselves and to learn Islam's true teachings and to face narrow teachings which did not in the least help to uphold the dignity of society and Islam.

"Today millions of Muslims are being oppressed, tortured and killed and 1,000 million Muslims in the world are unable to do anything because they are divided and too preoccupied in ensuring a place for them in the hereafter," he said.

He said they not only worshipped as they were called upon to do so but also invented their own prayers, wore certain types of garb and highlighted petty matters which only went to divide Muslims.

Apart from that they were also influenced by the religious/secular separation and prohibited knowledge which they considered as secular even though such knowledge was pioneered and expanded by Muslim ulamas of the past. -- more

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▼10/06/16-25MST

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He said such action on their part caused Muslims to be narrow-minded, poor, weak and easily manipulated.

However such groups did not hesitate to make use of inventions that were the fruit of such "haram" knowledge including facilities for defence and worship.

The Prime Minister said as Muslims were dependent on knowledge and industries which belonged to others, "we are unable to save oppressed Muslims if our suppliers did not permit us."

"Hence, let's not prohibit the learning and acquiring of knowledge. Instead we should encourage Muslim youths to steadfastly acquire this knowledge and at the same time learn the true teachings of Islam," he said.

Dr Mahathir said even though Malaysia was not trying to project itself as a model to other Islamic countries, many Muslims and Islamic nations looked up to Malaysia as a model and a good example.

"We should not be arrogant over this, but strive to defend our approach which sought to strike a balance between the world and the hereafter as exhorted by Islam," the Prime Minister said. -- more

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"We are most fortunate that our country has peace and harmony unlike the situation in some Islamic countries which not only experience terrible famine but their people too are attacked, tortured and killed often by people of the same faith."

"Extremist elements hiding behind the name of Islam frequently cause chaos through killings and explosions, in their efforts to topple governments which they claim are not Islamic enough," Dr Mahathir said.

In the end Islamic countries became weak and poor and were unable to defend their sovereignty, he said.

Even if the extremists succeeded, they would inherit a country which was poor and weak and would not escape foreign domination, he added.

--Bernama

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