

PM: Moral values not sacrificed

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KUALA TERENGGANU, Thurs. — Malaysia has proven its critics wrong by showing that religion and good moral values need not be sacrificed for the sake of development, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the fact that Malaysia had been successfully developed had become the envy of the Western nations, which every now and again tried to find fault to discredit the country and its leaders.

He said the foreign media too were reluctant to give due recognition to the success achieved by the country, adding that it seemed they hated Malaysia for its ability to compete with the more developed nations.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the launching of the Terengganu Second Phase Development Programme 1995-2010, at Stadium Negeri here. Also present were his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad and State secretary Datuk Seri Mohd Azahar Othman.

Dr Mahathir said the envious attitude among the developed nations towards the country was probably because Malaysia was led by Muslim leaders.

"They think Muslims have no capacity to administer a nation and Islam is not suitable for development by referring to several Islamic nations which are not only chaotic but also not properly administered."

He said Western nations, while saying that riots among people of the same religion were unhealthy, actually wanted it to prevail so that Islamic countries would not progress and would not be able to compete with them.

"I am not anti-West but the fact remains that the West does not want us to progress and live in peace and harmony," the Prime Minister said.

He said the West always feared Islamic progress and would try to retard its development.

"The fear started during the glorious days of Islam when countries like Spain and Western Europe came under Islamic rule.



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"Because of this they launched a crusade to fight Islam and until today they not only hate Muslims but also fear Islam," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had no intention of criticising the West but was merely trying to show that progress and development could be achieved without sacrificing religion.

He said Malaysia's objective of becoming a developed nation was not like what the West had interpreted where development and individual freedom had eroded human values.

The West, he said, was so advanced at the expense of moral values of people and to the extent that if one were to criticise individual freedom, they would be labelled as infringing human rights.

"If we were to follow them we would be destroyed. We want development to be in our own mould where physical and spiritual values are equally emphasised," he added.

He said the latest Western media attack on Malaysia was a *Newsweek* report which criticised the Government for wasting its funds on the construction of the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) project, even though the project was privatised.

He said in view of the general election, it criticised the Government as being undemocratic and spending lavishly.

He said it also refused to acknowledge the fact that the KLCC twin towers would be the tallest in the world and instead said that they were the tallest in Asia.

"They are not happy that the tallest building in the world which is in Malaysia has been certified taller than the World Trade Centre in New York (417 metres)

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Funds wisely spent for the people

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or the Spars Towers in Chicago (443 metres).

"We do not claim to have the tallest building in the world but the recognition was certified by an international body," Dr Mahathir said.

The 450-metre tall KLCC twin towers was certified the tallest building in the world by an independent international body, the United States-based Council of Tall Buildings.

On Malaysia sending its students overseas, he said it was not because it could not build enough universities and colleges but because of the lack of sufficient workers who preferred to seek employment with the private sector where it was more lucrative.

He also said that unlike some developed countries which used their funds to build monuments and statues in memory of their leaders, Malaysia spent wisely to provide for the needs of its people.

"We build roads, provide water and electricity even in the remote areas in addition to health and medical facilities," he said.

He also commended the Terengganu Government for its commitment to bringing the State on par with other more developed ones.

He said 38 years ago, the State was really backward so much so that a journey from Kuantan to Kota Baru not only had to pass through laterite roads but also many bridges.

But today the State had undergone amazing changes because of the Government's proper planning and implementation.

He said Terengganu was luckier than other States because of its oil revenue which had enabled it to carry out its programmes effectively.

After completing the first 15-year development programme last year, the State Government is now implementing its second phase of its development programme spanning another 15 years.

Among the targets it hopes to achieve by 2010 are achieving Gross Domestic Growth of 7.5 per cent a year, increasing per capita income from RM8,507 to RM10,000 and reducing the poverty rate from 19 per cent now to 10 per cent.