

19 MAY 1996

Muslims

DR MAHATHIR CALLS ON MUSLIMS TO PURSUE KNOWLEDGE BESIDES WEALTH

SAN FRANCISCO, May 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on Muslim communities to pursue not only wealth but also knowledge to prepare themselves for the challenges of the future.

"It's not good enough (for Muslims) to be rich in money," but they needed to develop their intellectual capacities, their industries and they also needed to stand up and represent their countries, he said to a packed room of American Muslim businessmen in Silicon Valley, California, Saturday.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had achieved "a little in that direction", growing from an economy that depended on commodities such as rubber and tin to an economy that produced and exported manufactured goods through labour-intensive industries initially, and now through capital-intensive industries.

The prime minister arrived here Saturday to address two business conferences here and in Washington DC following a five-day visit to Japan to attract Japanese investors to Malaysia's future Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

Dr Mahathir also toured the Stanford University Technology Park, and Sun Microsystems, Inc., the company that developed the HotJava live Web browser, a software system that "brings the Internet alive."

Asked by a businessman what advice he would give to other developing nations in the Muslim world, he said: "I don't go around giving advice to people, that's my policy... we don't give unsolicited advice."

However, the Muslim world could learn from multi-racial, multi-religious Malaysia where Muslims peacefully cooperated with non-Muslims to develop the nation, he told the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

The chairman of the chamber, Amr Mohsen, expressed the group's admiration for Dr Mahathir's leadership and his skill in motivating Muslims in Malaysia towards modernisation.

The ICCI's goals include developing business opportunities for Muslims, promoting establishment of Islamic financial institutions in America and promoting trade and business cooperation with Islamic countries.

The chamber's three-point strategy includes the creation of stronger Muslim businesses and helping members to advance professionally.

There are an estimated five to six million Muslims in the United States. -- BERNAMA

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