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Mahathir-Culture

RETAIN M'SIAN HOSPITALITY, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

PONTIAN, July 5 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has reminded the people to retain their hospitality and family institution nurtured thus far despite the scramble to seek for wealth and progress.

The Prime Minister said the people must remember that progress could bring adverse effects if they were not careful.

"As such, it is very important for them to be careful as progress could erode the friendly spirit among us and lead to moral decadence," he said when launching the state-level "Gerak Mesra" programme at Sekolah Menengah Parit Betak, Benut, near here, today.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should not emulate what was being done by the people in western countries as many of them have no respect for elders.

"Sometimes, many strange things happen. Such things, to a certain extent, is due to progress," he said.

In Malaysia, the people regarded a family comprising parents and children but in the west, the mother and children constitute a family as they do not know who their father is.

"Strange things happen which we cannot accept as their actions tantamount to people of unsound mind. This, to a certain extent, is due to the progress achieved in developed countries," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia must attain growth and the people must be rich and progressive without facing famine and poverty-related problems.

In the pursuit to seek wealth and progress, the values of hospitality and friendliness among leaders and people, old and young, must be retained, he said.

"We don't want such noble values to diminish because we are rich. We have seen some of these things happening in our country when there is migration to urban areas. People living in urban areas, sometimes, don't know who their neighbours are, or one family don't know the other," he said.

Dr Mahathir said such cultures were dangerous to Malaysian society.

"Instead, we want to preserve the present cultures where the various ethnic groups respect and friendly to each other," he said.

If people forget about the noble values, the progress achieved so far would be meaningless and lead to destruction as could be seen in the moral decadence among people in western countries.

Dr Mahathir said if hospitality and courteousness could be maintained, Malaysians would become a developed race with high values and could protect their integrity.

"Before, we were colonialised, look down upon, humiliated and treated as slaves to others. We want to redeem our dignity and for that, we need to seek progress and wealth but at the same time safeguard our culture and noble values," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the "Gerak Mesra" campaign launched by the government could help retain the hospitality and courteousness of the people.

Earlier, the Prime Minister launched a programme to upgrade the rural roads in Johor, implemented by Kumpulan Prasarana Rakyat Johor (KPRJ), a subsidiary of the state government.

He also cycled for one kilometre on Jalan Parit Betak. -- BERNAMA
MKO TS