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Malays urged to study nationalism, Islam in detail

THE Malays should study nationalism and Islam in detail to better understand the need to be united and to develop further.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Musa Hitam said if the Malays themselves cannot adapt to this need, "I am afraid that we will be left behind".

He was commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's address at the Umno General Assembly yesterday in Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir, who is the party president, touched on, among others, issues affecting the Malays and religion.

Musa said it is timely that Dr Mahathir raised the issues at the general assembly.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak said complacency should not be allowed to set in following the achievements of the country so far.

He said that a successful nation is built through hard work. "Extremism and concentration of petty things will not improve our (Malays) way of thinking.

"If we let such things dominate our way of thinking, we will lose direction. We will not reach our objectives in building a developed nation," Najib, who is also the Education Minister, said.

He added that Malaysia will continue to be a model in implementing the right teachings and practices of Islam.

Malaysia is being recognised by both Islamic and non-Islamic countries as a model in the effective implementation of the teachings and practices of the religion, he added.

As far as the Education Ministry is concerned, Najib said it is taking a balanced approach in its school syllabus by making making religious education a compulsory subject.

"We also encourage students to take up religious courses at a higher level. Such a balance (between religious and non-religious subjects) is important as we do not want students to concentrate on only one aspect and neglect the rest."

Najib said the Malays should also master other languages to enable them to venture into other fields.

Wanita Umno leader Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman said the need to acquire more knowledge should be viewed as a challenge.

"We should make it (acquiring of knowledge) a way of life. Respecting someone on their physical aspects alone is not enough.

"In order for us to be respected by the other Muslims, we should be able to master many other fields," she said.

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