

26/12/1998

Acquire knowledge, PM urges Muslims

LANGKAWI, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded Muslims on the need to acquire knowledge to enable them to compete with others.

Citing several examples of oppression and aggression against Muslims in certain countries, he said such situations existed because the Muslims failed to acquire appropriate knowledge to defend themselves and compete with others.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims were capable of being as good as others if they worked hard.

"We are weak because we have not acquired the knowledge that enables us to compete," he said before breaking fast at Masjid Bayas.

The Prime Minister stressed the importance of acquiring knowledge in areas such as electronics and computers which would help put Muslims on a stronger platform.

He said even in having to defend themselves, Muslims would need to have sophisticated weapons.

"But today, Muslims are still depending on others for weapons and even nations in the Middle East have to exchange oil for aircraft," he said, adding that if Muslims worked hard and acquired knowledge, they would one day emerge stronger.

"When we emerge stronger, we will be able to help other fellow Muslims who are suffering in other countries like what we had done previously when we assisted our fellow Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina and other countries."

Dr Mahathir also reminded Muslims to be thankful that they were able to carry out their obligations by fasting during Ramadan peacefully unlike in other countries.

He also said Muslims should not blame it on fate if their countries were in chaos.

"We can say that it is fated that our country is in chaos like being bombarded with missiles but God gives us a mind to think and work out ways to improve our lives."

Dr Mahathir also called on Muslims to be grateful that they were not suffering as much as those in other countries during the current economic crisis.

He said although Malaysia was also facing problems, it was not as bad as in other countries like Indonesia.

Despite the economic problems, the Prime Minister said, the number of Muslims who would perform the haj this year would exceed the quota fixed by Saudi Arabia.

"The quota for Muslims in Indonesia is 200,000 but only 60,000 Indonesians can afford to perform the haj this year," he said.

Joining Dr Mahathir in breaking fast were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid and Agriculture Ministry Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Abu Bakar Taib.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir, who arrived from Alor Star, performed Friday prayers at Masjid Aishah.

In Alor Star, he visited his sisters, Refeah and Habsah, at Taman Mutiara, Jalan Pegawai.

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