

29 SEP 1998

Parliament-Mahathir (Witnesses)

IMPECCABLE WITNESSES DIFFICULT TO FIND IN THE PRESENT SOCIETY, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that due to the state of the present society where many people claim to be Muslims but fail to practise the true teachings of Islam, it is most difficult for the authorities to seek four men of impeccable character to serve as witnesses to prove the act of sodomy.

The Prime Minister said that those involved would normally indulge in such activities in total privacy but it did not mean that society could not take action against them to curb such activities.

This is because such activities could create various problems for the society, he said when winding up the debate on the Securities Industry (Central Depository)(Amendment) Bill at a special sitting of the Dewan Rakyat today.

During the debate, Abdul Hadi Awang (PAS-Marang) stated that in Islam four witnesses of impeccable character would be required to serve as witnesses to prove the acts of illicit sex and sodomy.

"We find that many people claim themselves to be Muslims but they fail to practise the true teachings of Islam...lying, defaming...and there are Muslims who believe in something which clearly does not originate from Islam.

"In such a society, it is difficult to seek four men to serve as witnesses to an act of sodomy committed by any party," he said.

"They (those alleged to have committed sodomy) will not be deemed to be guilty before being proven guilty, but they should allow the process of law to be applied to them in the same manner applied to others," he said.

They should not be treated any differently even if they were state leaders or former state leaders, and the due process of the law should take place to determine whether they were guilty or not, he said.

"This is the process of the law which applies in this country," he said.

"In the country, there are many people who place much emphasis on politics, so fond of defaming...as such our society is not the perfect Muslim community," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the government was seeking the cooperation of various parties to assist in interpreting Islam in the interest of politics and other aspects.

-- BERNAMA

ARA NMO RM