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Mahathir-Grateful

MALAYSIAN MUSLIMS SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR PEACE, SAYS MAHATHIR

LANGKAWI, Dec 25 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Muslims should be grateful that they could still carry out their religious obligations with ease even during the economic downturn compared to their brothers in other Islamic countries.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said they should show their gratefulness by striving harder to improve themselves, not leaving it just to fate.

"Malaysians should be grateful that there is peace in the country and this has allowed them to carry out their religious obligations without fear of being oppressed," he said during the breaking of fast with the people at Masjid Al Tasnim, Kampung Bayas near here this evening.

Dr Mahathir said that even during the current economic downturn, Muslims in Malaysia could still go to Mecca to perform the Haj in numbers exceeding the quota given by the Saudi Arabia.

In Indonesia, only 60,000 people could perform the Haj due to economic hardships, far few than their quota of 200,000 pilgrims, he said.

He also reminded Muslims in the country that it was also their religious obligation to search for knowledge especially those relating to technology and computer to enable them to effectively defend themselves against aggression.

"The fact is that Muslims are as capable as any other people but they did not heed the call to seek knowledge especially that on defence and as a result they have to rely on others," he said.

He said they had to buy guns, rockets and aircraft from others to meet their defence needs because they did not know how to make them themselves.

As a result, they continued to be oppressed and victimised because of their complacency in search of knowledge to defend themselves, he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia could be a major power in future and could other fellow Muslims in the world if Muslims in the country strived hard to acquired these knowledge.

"Maybe one day, not next year or 10 years from now, but we will if we are grateful for what we have now...if we work hard, we could emerge as a power capable of helping Muslims in other countries like what we did to help the Bosnians," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims knew that if they tried they could free themselves as God certainly did not them to be oppressed or slaughtered by others if not for their complacency.

"Other knowledge must be sought together with that on religious obligation...for if we neglect other branches of knowledge, it would be our weakness," he said.

As such, he said he would like the see the contents of Friday prayers sermons to include such calls to Muslims in improving themselves for the good of their country.

-- BERNAMA

NH ABG