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Specific Quranic verse recitation in Friday prayers

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. The Malaysian Islamic Development Department has directed all State Religious Affairs Councils to insert the recitation of a specific Quranic verse during Friday prayers, beginning tomorrow.

The purpose is to seek divine intervention to minimise any adverse effects on Malaysians as a result of the current economic problems and natural incidents affecting the country, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman.

He said all State mosques and suraus were encouraged to recite the "Qunut Nazillah" verse during Friday prayers for a minimum of four weeks. They can extend the period if they wished to.

"The Quranic verse is always recited by Muslims when they face challenging situations. This practice should be encouraged now as the country is facing challenging times."

Abdul Hamid said this after presenting 220 computers and colour printers to the States' religious leaders to be distributed among 210 religious schools nationwide.

The equipment costing about RM1 million were contributed by the Federal Territory Religious Affairs Council through its holding and investment arm, Yayasan Taqwa Wilayah Persekutuan Berhad, which manages tithe collections.

Also present were Penang Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Mohd Shariff Omar, Tithe Collection Centre chairman Datuk Abdul Rahim Bakar and Federal Territory Religious Department director Wan Mahmood Wan Yaacob.

Abdul Hamid said it was the responsibility of all Muslims to safeguard the nation from the threat of being "colonialised through economic means".

"The threat is real. Foreign elements are manipulating our stock markets and weakening our currency so that they can buy over Malaysian companies at a mere fraction of their actual value.

"Muslims should play their part to prevent our nation from falling victim to the wishes of foreign interests," he said.

Abdul Hamid said about 430 million Muslims comprising 190 million Arabs and 240 million Malays from the Asian region were faced with difficulties.

"The Arab Muslims are faced with a war threat while the Malay Muslims in this region are being threatened with economic colonialisation," he said, adding that Muslims should co-operate with the Government and remain united to minimise the adverse effects of the country's present difficulties.

On the future of Muslims, Abdul Hamid said it was important for today's youths to acquire both religious and academic knowledge as this would make them resilient and skilful to face future challenges.

"There are 75,000 Muslim students in religious schools nationwide who have also been encouraged to enrol in private institutions to learn other academic and professional courses.

"In future, these Muslim students will be the main thrust in the administration and development of the country," he said.

Abdul Hamid said due to the importance of religious schools in the development of Muslims, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had requested the council to develop its Baitulmal Professional Institute.

"With political will and Muslim consensus the institute can be expanded with more branches."

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