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M'SIA WILL HAVE STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY IN 40 YEARS, SAYS HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, April 28 (Bernama) -- There can be a strong civil society in Malaysia in 40 years due to the increasing awareness and faith in Islam, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman said today.

He said the move towards the formation of a civil society started when compulsory Islamic education was introduced in schools.

The minister told reporters this after attending the Maal Hijrah national-level celebrations, themed, "Nation's Prosperity is Our Responsibility", at Pusat Islam here.

The moderate scale gathering was graced by the presence of Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar and was attended by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad along with 1,300 Muslims.

Asked on the progress of Muslims towards achieving the civil society status, Abdul Hamid said: "Very soon ... we have educated the people for 40 years, 11 years of Islamic education. At this point, we can see that we have succeeded."

Abdul Hamid said the civil society characteristics among Malaysians were quite evident with greater awareness of noble values like love for peace.

"Muslims' faith is strong, but socially we are not sure. Their commitment to the environment and fellow humans has not been very fair although they may be pious," he said.

--RAZ HAR SK