

14 JAN 1999

Mahathir-Leaders

DON'T BE TAKEN IN BY EXTERNAL APPEARANCE OF LEADERS

MACHANG, Jan 14 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today advised the people not to be taken in by the image projected by a leader.

The prime minister said a leader might appear good on the outside but this did not reflect his true self.

"We say we hold true to Islam, we fight for Islam, but our conduct is not in keeping with what we claim to be," he said when addressing about 5,000 people at a breaking of fast at Sekolah Menengah Sains Machang, here.

Present were his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Rural Development Minister Annuar Musa, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ibrahim Ali and MP for Gua Musang Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

Dr Mahathir said: "I'm sad that during the fasting month, there are those who use the surau and mosques to speak out and run others down," he said.

He said the people should not follow such leaders because it deviated from Islamic teachings.

Dr Mahathir said that in Islam, one had a right to criticise any leader who did something bad and need not follow him if he refused to accept the criticism.

"During prayers, the congregation has a right to criticise the imam if he is wrong because the imam is leading the prayers.

"What is the use of practising Islamic teachings if our ways, our conduct and our speech are not in line with Islamic teachings?. This shows that we are ungrateful," he said.

He said although there was freedom of speech in the country, it was not good to run down others, especially in lectures.

He also said that the people should be thankful for the peace and prosperity they now enjoyed and should work hard to strengthen the national economy and defence.

-- BERNAMA

BD/ZI JK