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Mahathir-Islam

DON'T USE MOSQUES TO SPLIT MUSLIMS, SAYS MAHATHIR

JOHOR BAHRU, May 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded Muslims in the country to be constantly grateful and not to use mosques to divide the ummah.

"We should put the mosque to good use as and treat it as one of our good fortunes," he said when opening the Felda Taib Andak mosque in Kulai near here.

The prime minister was on the second day of his two-day visit to Johor.

He said Muslims in Malaysia were more fortunate than fellow Muslims in other parts of the world who could not even perform Friday prayers because their countries never had peace.

"Their mosques got burnt down, they were attacked, killed and evicted from their homes. We're fortunate and should be grateful for the good life that we enjoy in our country," he said.

He said the government was duty-bound to erect mosques not only for Muslims to pray but to also use them to reinforce Muslim brotherhood.

Dr Mahathir said it was saddening and most unfortunate that mosques in some places were used to slander and hurl abuses against certain individuals.

"Mosques built by the government are sometimes used to condemn the government. Even if there is a need to condemn the government, do it elsewhere," he said.

The prime minister said that at times Malaysians were strongly under the impression that they were secured and could do anything they fancied doing.

"The truth is we're not that safe if we're disunited. We may not be able to defend ourselves and protect our religion. This is a reality," he said.

Dr Mahathir said divided Muslims were weak Muslims whereas Islam teaches its followers to be united and regard all Muslims near and far as brothers.

However, he said, because of political motives, there were people who had no qualms about misusing the mosque to spread thoughts contrary to Islamic teachings.

Politics and religion cannot mix, said Dr Mahathir.

"The politics of Islam is about taking on the enemies of Islam and is not about certain political parties challenging other political parties. This is not Islamic politics, this is party politics," he said.

The prime minister said what was meant by Muslim political responsibility was not taking side with certain political parties.

"When we align ourselves to a certain political party, we may deliberately misinterpret Islamic teachings for the party's selfish gains and not for Islam," he said.

Also present were Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and Land and Cooperative Development Minister Tan Sri Kasitah Gaddam.

-- BERNAMA

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