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Mahathir-Islam

FOLLOW ISLAMIC TEACHINGS AND UNITE TO PROGRESS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 23 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Muslims should follow the true Islamic teachings and step up unity to progress.

The prime minister said the effective way to propagate the religion was through good example of a fair and efficient administration.

"Malaysia is guided by Islamic teachings," he said a meeting with media editors from West Asia at his office, here.

He was responding to questions posed by the editors who wanted to know the secret of the success of Malaysia which they regarded as a model of an Islamic country which Muslims worldwide are proud of.

"We want to prove that Muslims can also administer a multireligious country fairly until it achieves development," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia recognised the different religions and their followers could practise their faith in keeping with the country's multiracial society.

He said that among the Muslims too there should be no animosity although they might have their differences.

"We must treat each other as brothers, reduce politicking and concentrate on development," he said, adding that he was saddened by several developments like the dispute among the various sects in Islamic countries.

The editors, who spoke through an interpreter, asked Dr Mahathir about Malaysia's experience so that other Islamic countries could share it to promote the harmonious lifestyle among their people.

On the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), the prime minister said it was a good organisation "but because we don't adhere to the spirit of Islam, it can't function well... If we don't act together we become weak."

He said the Islamic countries had the most precious gift from God, namely oil, but because there was no union among them, even a simple step like "shutting off" the oil pipeline for use as an effective weapon was difficult to execute.

-- BERNAMA

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