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Mahathir-Fasting

MUSLIMS ABLE TO DISCHARGE RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS DESPITE SLOWDOWN

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 6 (Bernama) -- Muslims in Malaysia are able to discharge their religious obligations effectively and in peace despite the shortcomings of economic recession, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Malaysians were able to celebrate Hari Raya like as usual without much of a problem unlike in other countries faced with economic problems, he said.

Charitable activities like the giving of donations and Hari Raya gifts were continuing and Malaysians were willing to make donations to welfare bodies despite the country facing economic problems, he said.

"We should be grateful to God that though the country is facing economic problems it is not as bad as in some other countries where there are no longer any donors," he said when handing over school aid and Hari Raya gifts to orphans from the Federal Territory at the Tabung Haji Building here.

"Despite facing economic pressures and being attacked by currency traders, Malaysia appears as though it is not facing any economic slowdown," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this was because the Malaysian population was multi-racial and was not in the habit of resorting to wild action despite the economic downturn.

People were going about without any rioting or fighting among themselves and instead were living in peace and harmony.

He said if there was rioting it would be difficult for people to earn their living and it would also affect buying and selling and make the situation even worse.

"This shows the utmost importance of not resorting to wild action during the economic crisis," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the situation was under control in Malaysia and there was cooperation among the people thus enabling the economy to recover and the economy would further improve if there was continued peace.

He was also grateful that the reformasi activities of a small section of the people were not taking place during Ramadan.

The Prime Minister said certain groups were using rioters purportedly to champion human rights but in fact the actual human right was the right to live in peace and harmony.

"What is the use if the majority of the people are not able to live their lives in peace? Certain groups try to get the support of others to pursue wild action," he said.

He hoped school children in need of help would realise how fortunate they were as there were Malaysians willing to donate towards their cause.

Dr Mahathir hoped Malaysians would continue to be generous and retain their other virtues.

"It is hoped the orphans will set an example when they grow up and also donate to others and not forget that they had once received such help," he added.

The aid totalling RM100,000, being donations from individuals and companies, was distributed among 381 orphans from the Federal Territory.

Each child received RM80 as Hari Raya gift and RM100 to RM140 in school aid.

The Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Minister

in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman and the President of the Islamic Orphans Welfare Association of Federal Territory, Datuk Ahmad Razali Mohd Ali were among the dignitaries present.

-- BERNAMA

ROZ AAM