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Mahathir-Islam

PURSUE WEALTH TO HELP OTHER MUSLIMS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

ALOR SETAR, Jan 15 (Bernama) -- Muslims can pursue wealth so long as they remember to use the wealth to help the less fortunate and donate towards the good of the religion and country, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said it was not wrong for Muslims to chase wealth because through the wealth they could help develop the country and raise the living standard of other Muslims.

"The pursuit of wealth among Muslims is not bad so long as Muslims don't forget their origins, religion and donate to develop houses of worship like surau and mosques," he said at a ground-breaking ceremony for the al-Bukhary Islamic Complex in Jalan Langgar, here.

Present were his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid, al-Bukhary Foundation chairman Datuk Syed Mokhtar al-Bukhary and state executive councillors.

Dr Mahathir said an Islamic country also needed wealth because only a rich country would develop and provide the military equipment to defend itself.

He said Islamic countries were bombed, tortured, pressured and oppressed because they were poor.

"That is why we must rectify the situation so that we are not oppressed like that," he said.

Dr Mahathir expressed confidence that the al-Bukhary Islamic complex would provide Muslims an opportunity to acquire knowledge besides work and business opportunities to help raise their income.

He also said that the use of the al-Bukhary Islamic Complex, which comprises a mosque, school and religious school, orphanage, old folks home, rest house, treatment centre and business premises, was not confined to Muslims only.

Although it was named an Islamic complex, non-Muslims could also use the business premises and send their children to the school in the complex, he said.

"In this way, we can bring them closer to Islam and dispel their suspicion of Muslims as had happened in other countries," he said.

The prime minister said that if Muslims could show that they could get along with Muslims as well as non-Muslims, they could counter the prejudice created by the foreign media against Muslims and Islam which they linked to violence.

He said that in this way too Muslims could show non-Muslims that Islam was not a threat to them and that it was a religion that advocated love of peace.

The RM70 million complex located on an 11.8ha site will be built in stages and is expected to be completed in 18 months.

Speaking to reporters later, Dr Mahathir said no one should use Islam to gain popularity for his political party or to create hatred among Muslims.

"Using Islamic issues to create hatred for other Muslims is regrettable, rather we should be using the religion to bring Muslims closer to each other.

He said Islam was not the domain of specific groups but belonged to everyone.

Asked about the setting up of more than one political party for

Muslims, he said that was not a problem.

"The difference between the parties is only their approach to developing the society. There should be no difference in terms of practice and interpretation because it would destroy the religion," he said.

Dr Mahathir said many parties were of the opinion that Malaysia could serve as an example to other countries of how a multiracial society could live in peace and progress.

"Although Muslims form the majority in the country and have the political strength, the non-Muslims are not oppressed," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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