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Mahathir-century

21ST CENTURY WILL BE WORLD CENTURY, SAYS MAHATHIR

By: Yong Soo Heong

KUALA LUMPUR, April 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says the next century will be a World Century and the world will shrink even more because of the ease in travel and communications.

"Whether we like it or not, we will all be rubbing shoulders with one another, we who are from every continent, of every colour and ethnicity," he writes in his soon-to-be-released book, "A New Deal For Asia" (Pelanduk Publications paperback). The book will be in the market early next month.

"People will move. Geographical or man-made barriers will not stop people from moving from country to country. They will move in trickles at first but the movement will be massive as the century progresses," the prime minister said.

The book once again provides an insight to Dr Mahathir's far-reaching thoughts on how the world would shape up and how ethnic and national barriers would crumble.

Dr Mahathir again emphasised that the previous view by some Asians brimming with confidence prior to the Asian financial crisis in that the 21st century would be the Asian Century was flawed.

"The 21st century is not going to belong to any continent," he said.

Dr Mahathir ventured to say that the single-ethnic country would disappear rapidly and every country would eventually be multi-ethnic and therefore, multi-cultural.

He also felt that the different ethnic groups in each country would fight each other at the beginning "but eventually they will all be reconciled to living together."

Dr Mahathir said: "They will inter-marry or co-habit. Their children will be of mixed parentage, neither black, nor white, nor brown, nor yellow. Their colour will be indeterminate.

"Their cultures will also mix. For most there will be no religion. There will be a tussle between those who want to keep their religious faith and those who reject any kind of spiritualism.

"One thing is for sure though. Nothing will be clear-cut. Anything can happen. Attempts to be distinctive and definite will fail."

Dr Mahathir also said attempts to contain China or Asia must fail, sooner rather than later.

Saying that human development and progress in Asia may be slowed a little following the financial crisis, but they cannot be slowed forever.

He said European attempts to dominate the world would fail as would any other attempt by any civilisation or continent or ethnic group.

"Asians will certainly not dominate the world. But Asians or the mixed people living in Asia will take their rightful place, their rightful share of the World Century," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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