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Mahathir-Sin

WE HAVE SINNED FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO HELP MUSLIM BRETHERN, SAYS PM

JITRA, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Muslims in the country have sinned for not being able to help their brethren in other countries from external pressure for want of knowledge in defence.

"We have sinned for not appreciating the teachings of the Quran which requires Muslims to acquire knowledge in all fields, not just on prayers," he said at the laying of the foundation stone of Pusat Ilmu in Kampung Pulau Pisang, Tunjang, near here.

He was referring to the oppression of Muslims in Kosovo and Bosnia who could not be helped by their Muslim brethren in other countries.

Dr Mahathir said that as a result of only learning how to pray, the Muslims had become weak to the extent that they had to depend on the western powers for modern weapons to defend themselves.

"There are Islamic countries that are bigger and stronger than the western countries but are weak in terms of defence knowledge and others...this resulted in their failure to play a role to help alleviate the sufferings of the people of Kosovo and Bosnia," he said.

Dr Mahathir said other knowledge besides that on worship included the Fardu Kifayah (social obligation) like prayers for the dead which must be learnt to save Muslims from sin.

"This includes knowledge in defence, science, technology and so forth...if we are in possession of all these, incidents like that in Kosovo and Bosnia could have been prevented," he said.

The prime minister said some parties had claimed that acquiring knowledge other than that on "Fardu Ain" (personal obligation) was a betrayal to Islam because it contained secular aspects when this was actually not stated in the Quran.

"The first Quranic verse passed on to the prophet was Iqra' which means read...it does not say read the Quran only and forget about other knowledge. The reading meant here is to gain knowledge including other knowledge," he said.

In fact Muslims were asked to seek knowledge even as far as China, he added.

Realising this, Dr Mahathir said, the Umno-led government was diligent in developing the country based on knowledge like engineering, science and information without forgetting the knowledge of worship.

He said the Muslims of long ago were renowned when they were able to command knowledge other than that on worship.

"But Muslims now will become stupid for concentrating only on matters of worship and regarding other matters as secular," he said.

-- BERNAMA