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OIC-History

DR MAHATHIR URGES MUSLIM NATIONS TO AVOID PAST MISTAKES

KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today chastised some Muslim countries for not learning lessons from the past as dangers of globalisation continue to breathe down their neck.

The Prime Minister said history had shown over and over again that the mistakes made through the ages were rather similar and as a result, Muslim countries kept on paying the same price.

He said in the past, Islam was successful in uniting a divided people who eventually led to the creation of a huge Muslim empire and civilisation stretching from China to Spain.

"But the process of world Islamisation was halted because the Muslims began to revert to their pre-Islamic ways. They began to quarrel and fight each other, setting up little kingdoms, rejecting their loyalty to Islam in favour of loyalty to their local rulers and states.

"They became engrossed in the interpretations and formulation of Islamic laws and quarrelled over who was right and who was wrong. Each tried to outdo the other in their religious fervour," he said when opening the 27th session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), here.

Dr Mahathir said preoccupied with their endless debates on Islamic laws and practices, Muslims neglected their defences completely and over time, the Muslim armies weakened and their territories fell into non-Muslim hands one by one.

He said the religion also taught that Islamic brotherhood was a prerequisite for survival and success.

The Muslim civilisation, he said, was once the most advanced and powerful, thanks to the early Muslims' adherence to the teachings of Islam to seek knowledge which enabled them to conquer the sciences, mathematics and the arts of previous civilisations.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims later rejected the pursuit of knowledge other than those concerned purely with the Islamic religion.

They failed to notice changes that were taking place in Europe brought about by the knowledge the Europeans acquired from the Muslims which led to the Industrial Revolution, he said.

"And so when the Industrial Age came, Muslims had no part in it. In fact, they rejected it as the creation of the devil. Muslim industries regressed, their hand-crafted products unable to challenge those of Europe.

"The unfortunate thing is that the Muslims faced a need to use the products of Western industries. Certainly, they needed the modern weapons that the West developed," he said.

It was clear that the Muslims were behind the rest of the world in the quest for knowledge, resulting in their inability to develop their countries and compete with even newer developed ones, added Dr Mahathir.

-- BERNAMA

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