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Mahathir-Malays

PM REITERATES HIS CONCERN OVER MALAY, MUSLIM DISUNITY

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight reiterated his concern over disunity and weaknesses now prevailing among Muslims in the country.

"It's unfortunate that the split is so serious now that the Malays are divided into two groups," he said at a breaking of the fast with about 200 former Terengganu PAS members who have now joined Umno at Seri Perdana, here.

He said among the reasons for the split was the exploitation of religion for political purposes to the extent that the obsession towards certain groups and leaders led them to believe that what was wrong from the religious aspect was right.

"As such, the Muslims have become disoriented that they don't care about anything else. For example in Lunas, there were cases of people being assaulted, vulgarity and kicking of women," he said.

He cited the case of some opposition supporters who were said to have gone to the extreme during the by-election for the Lunas state constituency recently where Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan) candidate Saifuddin Nasution Ismail had won.

Dr Mahathir said: "What has become of the Malays. They were united before, but now we are very weak and there are people who try to divide the Malays further. They will instigate and offer bribes to ensure that there are Malays who will oppose other Malays, particularly the government."

He said among the effects of the split was that Islam was no longer respected by others because its followers no longer demonstrated brotherly spirit as demanded by the religion.

In this regard, he urged the Malays and Muslims to recall the country's history particularly the strong solidarity demonstrated during the struggle for independence.

He said the awareness that there was a possibility that the country would continue to be owned by the British at that time made them unite against the colonialists.

"If we were divided then, we could have lost our country. But we were not divided and considered ourselves as united Malays and Muslims. Because we were united, we succeeded in fighting the British," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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