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Rulers agree to help ensure Malay unity (HL)

Sarban Singh

PUTRAJAYA, Fri. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Conference of Rulers has agreed to help strengthen unity among the Malays who are divided due to political differences and affiliations.

The Prime Minister said the Conference of Rulers, which met over two days, had agreed to come up with some "remedial measures".

He said it was his fervent hope that this initiative would be accepted by the Malays.

"During the conference yesterday, I briefed the Malay Rulers on the situation in the country, particularly among the Muslims who are facing some problems.

"The Rulers, who voiced their concern over the matter, gave the assurance that they would come up with some remedial measures to reunite the community."

Asked what the proposals were, Dr Mahathir said they were not disclosed and it was entirely up to the Rulers.

He said as the Federal Constitution clearly acknowledged the role of the Rulers as custodians of Islam in their respective States and the country in general, they were responsible for the affairs of the religion.

"My hope is that as Muslims, all Malays will accept whatever is decided by the Rulers... this is the responsibility of the Rulers and they cannot act individually but as the Conference of Rulers," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this was important because Malay Rulers could not get involved in politics.

The Prime Minister said the Conference of Rulers was unanimous in the decision that there was a need to reunite the Malays.

Asked whether the conference had also discussed the sacrilegious acts of some quarters who issued misleading fatwa (religious decree), Dr Mahathir said this was not discussed.

The 185th meeting of the Conference of Rulers, which ended yesterday, was chaired by Sultan Ahmad Shah of Pahang at Istana Negara.

Sultan Ahmad Shah is expected to announce details of the conference at a press conference in Kuantan tomorrow morning.

Several quarters had urged the Rulers to seek ways to arrest the widening gap between the Malays because of political inclinations, and check the misuse of religion for selfish political ends.

Earlier, the Prime Minister handed over the Jalur Gemilang to team Proton-PERT at his office here.

The team will represent Malaysia at the Rally of Indonesia to be held from March 31 to April 3.

The Rally of Indonesia is the first leg of the Asia-Pacific Rally Championship and the circuit includes Australia, New Zealand, China, Malaysia and Thailand.

Dr Mahathir wished the Malaysian team success and reminded its members to uphold the country's good name. Dr Mahathir also showed his skill in handling the turbo-powered four-wheel-drive Proton rally model which will be used by the team.

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