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Mahathir-Race

ALL COUNTRIES WILL HAVE MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 2 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today all countries will have multiracial citizens who come from all corners of the world in future.

The prime minister said the high human mobility now and the communication facilities like shipping and airlines would make it increasingly difficult to control a country's borders.

These factors would enable more people to migrate from one country to another, he said.

"In the centuries to come, or even the decades to come, there will be no country populated by only one ethnic group or race," he said in his keynote address at the Malaysian Institute of Islamic Understanding's (Ikim) Premier Dialogue here.

Dr Mahathir, who was speaking on "Tolerance -- the Malaysian Model", said this development would make it hard to preserve the indigenous people's identity through culture, religion and language because the immigrants would continue to retain their language, culture and religion.

Citing the example of the escalating racial problems in countries in Europe due to the human mobility factor, he indicated that the time might come when the race of a person would only be determined by his passport or identity card.

"Attempts to accept immigrants as citizens only after they assimilate the indigenous language, culture and religion will decrease and the citizens of a country will comprise various races with different language, culture and religion," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the migration of the poor races to the rich countries made racial problems more pronounced because there would be immigrants who would work hard and become richer than the locals who were not prepared to work hard.

"Whether or not these immigrant races succeed, they pose a threat to the locals," he said.

This threat would rise to an unacceptable level when the number of the immigrant race increased and this would not only cause racial tension but would also affect racial tolerance, he said.

Dr Mahathir said all parties must accept the reality that with more immigrants, racial relations would deteriorate and it would become more difficult for each race, especially the local population, to be tolerant.

"This is a human tendency which no one can overcome in all honesty and sincerity," he said, adding that arrogance of the race and insecurity were among the factors for intolerance of immigrants.

"The reality is that the tolerance level is closely related to interest of the self and the race. It is easy to show tolerance if the problem is in other people's country. When one's own country is threatened, tolerance is set aside," he said.

He cited as example the serious racial clashes in Britain recently when the British were always criticising Malaysia and accusing the Malays especially of being intolerant and unfair to the other races, especially the Chinese community.

The question was whether the racial clashes in Britain were due to the intolerance of the Whites, he added.

"Actually it is easy to be tolerant of immigrants in other countries, to be academically tolerant, but it's not so easy to be tolerant if the

immigrant race threatens oneself, he said.

The prime minister said the Europeans who made a lot of noise about human rights and were so vocal in rejecting racialism were no more tolerant nor less racialistic than the races they criticised.

"Although their governments try to be tolerant, the people and the government servants, including their police, are not tolerant," he said.

-- BERNAMA

AFY AHH JK