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All-out fight against deviationist groups

DUNGUN, Sat. - The Government will go all out to fight those who deliberately deviated from the true teachings of Islam as they are detrimental to the Muslims and the country, the Prime Minister said today.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said these people had betrayed Islam and did not wish to see the Muslims defend themselves.

"While Islam calls on its followers to master knowledge in all fields, these groups influence students to neglect other knowledge and to focus only on religious education and to be active in political activities."

Dr Mahathir said Islam demanded that its followers uphold the religion through the mastering of a broad spectrum of knowledge.

"Only through this can Muslims in Malaysia defend the country and religion and also help Muslims of other countries," he said at the Settlers' Day 2001 at Bandar Ketengah Jaya.

Also present were Land and Co-operative Development Minister Tan Sri Kasitah Gaddam and Felda chairman Datuk Dr Yusof Noor.

Dr Mahathir said in many Islamic countries, the action of these groups had caused the Muslims to become weak so much so that they could not protect themselves against outside threat, just like what was happening in Afghanistan.

The Government did not want Malaysians to suffer the same fate.

He said the actions of such groups had made it impossible for the Islamic countries to develop.

"These are the people who create chaos, resulting in Government not being able to concentrate on development because it has to spend time and money on curbing such activities."

Dr Mahathir said only if the Muslims were knowledgeable could they defend Islam and protect themselves.

"The Muslims are generally backward because they do not master knowledge."

He said the Government wanted to make sure that these groups would not succeed in drawing the support of the people.

"In this country, many will not raise questions when somebody claims that their struggle is for Islam.

"If a Government wants to develop an Islamic country, they will say the country is secular because for them, true Islamic teachings are what are being practised in Afghanistan - killing the people, engaging in non-stop wars and victimising women."

He said militant groups which robbed, killed, and threatened places of worship of other religions should not be treated lightly.

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