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Mahathir-Thankful

BE THANKFUL FOR GOOD LIFE, MUSLIMS TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the people of Malaysia especially Muslims should be thankful for the peaceful and prosperous life they enjoy compared to that of people in other countries.

"Alhamdulillah in Malaysia, the people live in peace and prosperity. We should be mindful of the fate of the less fortunate in other Muslim countries which are not peaceful, whose people are poor and suffering, and in fact some may have died of starvation," he said at the Nur Ramadan function organised by the Federal Territory Umno at Masjid Saidina Osman Al Affan in Bandar Tun Razak here today.

The Prime Minister said Muslims in the country should extend aid to the less fortunate even if they are in faraway land like Afghanistan whose people are suffering because of the attacks by the United States in search of terrorists.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was not against America's hunt for terrorists but it was unfortunate that the air strikes had brought sufferings to the people and caused them to become refugees.

"As human beings who live comfortably and peacefully, we should not forget to help them. We still need donations and aid, and it is appropriate that in this fasting month we extend aid, whether clothing or money," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the practice of giving aid was a religious obligation for Muslims while for non-Muslims it was also encouraged.

By helping the less fortunate, Malaysians would be known as a grateful race and would be rewarded with other forms of blessings, he said.

"It is hoped that we can promote this good attitude (giving help) and be a caring society not only during Ramadan (but always) because a caring society will make its people more successful," he said.

Dr Mahathir urged Muslims to practise moderation and inculcate the spirit of unity among the multi-racial people of various religions.

"For example, at breaking-of-fast functions, non-Muslims can be invited to join. It is not wrong, and with this we can enhance relations among the races in Malaysia and if this is done our country can be peaceful and stable," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians had fostered good racial relations and shown respect for the religious practices of other people.

Citing the breaking of fast as an example, he said non-Muslims not only enjoyed the "buka puasa" fare provided at hotels and restaurants but also made it a point not to start eating until it was time for their Muslim friends to break fast.

"This is a good sign and shows that there is mutual respect among Malaysians of different religions," he said.

Dr Mahathir also presented aid to 15 of the 1,800 less fortunate people in the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan who were selected to receive aid in conjunction with the fasting month.

Among other things, they each received RM100, five kilos of rice, a prayer mat and a bottle of vitamins.

-- BERNAMA

HS AFY YBY