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Mahathir-Change

MALAYS MUST CHANGE CULTURE TO BE SUCCESSFUL, SAYS DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, July 22 (Bernama) -- Malays should change their culture to be successful and work towards restoring their pride to defend Malay dignity, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"I have learned a lot from history. After analysing the successes and failures of various races in the world, I discovered that we will not succeed if we have values which cannot support or are unsuitable for development," he said.

He said values were part of culture and this was the reason why he had repeatedly emphasised on discipline, hardwork, honesty and the need to set aside personal interest.

"These are the values we should uphold. If we subscribe to these values we will certainly succeed," he said in an interview with the New Straits Times, which was published here today.

He said if the values of Malays were compared with those of the Chinese, it was found that the Chinese were more hard working and this reality must be accepted by all.

"It's not that the Malays cannot do it. They simply refuse to work hard and ...at times I feel sad about this.

"For a Chinese to work hard, it is expected of them because they are Chinese. What's wrong with emulating and working hard like them," he added.

The Prime Minister said if the Malays were to change their present culture it would not make them less Malay but they would be able to achieve success.

"They (Malays) take it easy. That is why we have a huge number of foreign workers - because we like it easy," he said.

He said if protection given to the Malays by the government was reduced, they (the Malays) would fail totally in view of their weakness and therefore they need to help the Malays to be self-reliant.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno President, said although the Malays have been reminded repeatedly, the Malay culture is still on the decline.

"In the past Umno was clean of money politics, it is not anymore. We have explained that it (money politics) will destroy them and that any race which is corrupt will be annihilated and we will lose our independence.

"We explained...I pleaded, I cried, I prayed, I did everything...it didn't change. They argued, what's wrong with taking only RM10? They said we didn't take much, just RM10. It is sad. If they took RM1 million and sold their rights, that's different but they sold their rights for just RM10," the Prime Minister said.

He said Malays should come up with a new culture where they must have internal resistance and a strong defence.

Dr Mahathir said if the Malays changed their culture and considered corruption as a disgusting and humiliating thing to indulge in and made an effort to reject it, they would succeed.

He said this was the reason why he asked for the assimilation of Islamic values in the administration of the government.

"Unfortunately today, when we ask them to teach Islamic values in government offices, apart from touching on fardu ain, they influenced others by saying that the government is less Islamic because we do not impose hudud laws and they would be guilty for not opposing a government which does not uphold the hudud laws," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he does not agree that Islamic awareness among Malays

was becoming greater as it was just in appearance but not in substance.

He said there were many things in the Quran which could guide the community but "many of us preferred to focus on trivial matters."

He said while the Quran taught about the whole life such as how to behave and how to face enemies, some people taught Muslims how to hate others whom they perceived as not Islamic.

"If we can hold to the true teachings of Islam, Insyaallah we will achieve the same success as the Jahilliyah race (after they embraced Islam)," he added.

He said this was happening because some people are becoming very political, where they don't care what happens to Malays as long as they win some influence, even if they have to misinterpret the Quran to garner that influence.

He said also some ignored the actual Islamic teachings to concentrate on political matters.

"We found out that some religious teachings are not teachings about religion. (In one case) the teacher asked a student to put a plate on a piece of paper and draw a circle and paint it green and it became a Pas symbol," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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