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Mahathir-Muslims

MUSLIMS SHOULD GO BACK TO THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM, DAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 26 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Muslims should go back to the fundamental teachings of Islam so that they will be able to cope with any challenges including globalisation.

The prime minister said most Muslim countries were still yet to be fully aware of globalisation because they were busy fighting with each other.

"They are so busy fighting against each other, contrary to the teachings of the religion that they should not be fighting with each other. But they think that this is (figthing) what they should do.

"So while they are preoccupied with that, they really cannot understand fully what is coming into their direction," he told participants of the International Conference on Globalisation, here.

Dr Mahathir was answering a question on why most Muslim countries are still underdeveloped and backward or is there something that prevents the Islamic government from being developed, during a dialogue session.

The prime minister said there was nothing wrong with the teachings of Islam but something was wrong with the people who practised them.

"If they have followed the teachings of Islam, I am quite sure they would be able to cope with anything.

"People say that you don't fight against each other, you don't...but you don't follow. Despite that we are fighting each other...we can't even sit together to talk to each other," he said.

On his call for new globalisation in a new world order which puts people before profit, Dr Mahathir said the world society needs a kinder and gentler world because the world was extremely rich today due to the combination of new sources of raw materials together with new technology.

"It has added more value than it has been able before. For example, look at the microchip, just the tiny thing about that size (showing a tiny sign with his finger) but look at the value that has been added to the raw material that went into the microchip," he said.

Citing Malaysia for its "Prosper Thy Neighbour" policy, the prime minister said people should not impoverish other people in order to enrich themselves but should enrich other people to become richer.

Dr Mahathir said a lot of people were coming to Malaysia because their own countries were poor and they could not get jobs at home.

"So, why not be more gentle to the rest of the world. Why not try and help them to become more prosperous because it is good for you and for them.

"That is why, we think that to have a kinder and gentler society, not only in Malaysia but also in the world, would do no harm to anybody but it would do a very great deal of good for everyone," he said.

To a question on the impact of globalisation on digital divide, Dr Mahathir said the digital divide had created a very bad impact, in terms of widening the gap between the rich and the poor.

He said while the rich could afford all the new gadgets being produced to make the production cheaper, the poor would not have access on the gadgets and would have to go on their own way and this made them inefficient.

"We have decided that we may do away with borders, we will have globalised world. So when you have globalised world, you have to compete with those who produce things the new way," he said.

The prime minister said the rich should provide the new gadgets as cheaply as possible and only then it would overcome the digital divide.

Citing an example of the computer hardware and software that was so expensive, Dr Mahathir said the cost must be reduced to enable the poor to have access with the computer and eventually the world would be developed much more to the benefit of everyone.

"But I am afraid that there is not much attention paid to the digital divide in a serious and practical way. We talk a lot about it but...that's about all that will happen," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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