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Muslims must seek knowledge to forge ahead, says King

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah today called on Muslims to strive to seek knowledge as they were now lagging behind others.

He said it was sad to note that Muslims today did not mirror the qualities of the Prophet Muhammad and had yet to fully adopt the teachings of Islam.

"For instance, Muslims are not striving hard enough to seek knowledge. Therefore, they lag behind and are unable to resist being attacked and conquered by more knowledgeable and skilled people," he said at the national-level Maulidur Rasul celebrations to mark the Prophet's birthday.

Present at the celebrations held at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil were Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Siti Aishah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and several Cabinet Ministers.

The celebrations, with the theme Unity for the Development of the Ummah began with a procession from the nearby Hockey Stadium.

Led by their respective Rulers, Muslims in other States also celebrated the occasion with processions and gatherings at stadiums and public squares.

In his address, the King also said the mastering of knowledge in Islam should extend beyond knowledge of Fardhu Ain (compulsory for individuals) to knowledge related to Fardhu Kifayah (compulsory for the community interest).

"Without knowledge of Fardhu Kifayah, it is impossible for Muslims to live safely and practise their Fardhu Ain duties with ease."

He added that Muslims must try to understand the gist of Islamic teachings as taught by the Prophet, and practise them correctly and seriously.

The King said the experiences of the Prophet, who had led a difficult life, showed how obstacles could be overcome by determination, perseverance, honesty and patience.

"This should be a guideline and a motivating factor for us in facing challenges in life," he said.

In his message in the souvenir programme, Dr Mahathir said Muslims could improve their lot if they followed the injunctions of Allah and the example of the Prophet.

He said Muslims in many parts of the world were backward, weak and oppressed by enemies of Islam. In some places, they were killed and chased from their homeland.

"Such misfortune would not happen if they are united and had equipped themselves with the knowledge to defend and protect themselves, and to progress," he said.

In Ipoh, about 2,000 people gathered at the Indera Mulia Stadium to join in the State-level Maulidur Rasul celebration.

The occasion began with a Quran recital by the winner of last year's international Quran recital, Radzi Kamarul Hailan, followed by the selawat (praising the Prophet) and the nasyid.

Sultan of Perak Sultan Azlan Shah, in his speech, reminded Muslims to learn from history, especially on the split of the ummah at the height of Islamic rule.

He said Muslims should avoid conflict and split among them and must

always be the role models for others.

He added Muslims should never allow others with vested interest to influence and confuse them.

Also present were Raja Permaisuri Perak Tuanku Bainun, Raja Muda Raja Nazrin Shah, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali, his wife Datin Seri Kamariah Mokri and other State dignitaries.

In Penang, about 1,000 residents took part in the procession held at Simpang Empat, Permatang Buluh, in Seberang Prai today.

The four-kilometre procession was led by Sungai Dua State Assemblyman Jasmin Mohamed on behalf of Deputy Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shariff Omar who is also Tasek Gelugor MP.

It was jointly organised by the Simpang Empat Mosque committee, the Sekolah Kebangsaan Simpang Empat Parents-Teachers Association and the Simpang Empat village security and development committee with the co-operation of the Penang Regional Development Authority (Perda).

The procession, which began at the Simpang Empat mosque, passed through Kampong Telur, Kampong Setol, Kampong Tok Hamid, Kampong Pokok Simpor and Kampong Simpang Empat before returning to the mosque.

Meanwhile, Yang di-Pertua Negeri Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Abbas attended the State-level celebration at Bertam Sports Complex, Kepala Batas, in Seberang Jaya, tonight.

In Seremban, the Yang di-Pertuan Besar Negeri Sembilan Tuanku Ja'afar Tuanku Abdul Rahman today reminded Muslims to get rid of negative behaviour that could only lead to animosity and division among them.

He was speaking at the Prophet Muhammad's birthday celebration at the Seremban Municipal Council here.

The Ruler said all efforts to unite Muslims in the country must be made and endorsed by all quarters, regardless of their political beliefs, for peace and stability of the nation.

"Negative behaviour that can only lead to animosity and division among Muslims in the country must be avoided at all costs while solidarity and togetherness must be made their culture."

Earlier, Tuanku Ja'afar led some 5,000 Muslims in a two-kilometre procession to mark the celebration. Also present were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Isa Abdul Samad and heads of departments.

The Ruler added that Muslims' strength must be enhanced, politically, economically and socially.

"Efforts to enhance the quality of living must also be made in line with the requirements of Islam."

Tuanku Ja'afar added the theme for this year's celebration served as a reminder for Muslims in the country to remain united and progressive.

Meanwhile, Mohamad Isa said the Muslims must be prepared at all times and not get easily swayed by quarters out to create trouble and disunity.

"There are Muslims trying to confuse other Muslims in the country by saying that subjects such as science must not be learnt as they are secular in nature and are against the teachings of Islam.

"We must not be confused by these people who know nothing but to create rift and division among us."

The Menteri Besar said the Muslims would be left behind if they did not partake in efforts to broaden their knowledge and perspective.

In Kota Kinabalu, Yang di-Pertua Negeri of Sabah Tun Sakaran Dandai joined some 5,000 Muslims in a walk from the Padang Merdeka to Wisma Muis to mark Maulidur Rasul.

Officiating the Sabah-level Maulidur Rasul celebration at Wisma Muis, Sakaran called on Muslims to unite if they hoped to enjoy continued progress.

"Muslims should be thankful at all times. We should continue to promote

understanding and co-operation among one another," he said.

In Bintulu, Sarawak, Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Abang Muhammad Salahuddin today reminded the Muslims that they had a vital role to play in ensuring peace and stability in the country.

He said misunderstandings and confrontations amongst themselves could lead to chaos and instability.

In his speech at the State level Prophet Muhammad's birthday celebration cum procession, he urged them to practise the spirit of tolerance among themselves and with peoples of other faiths.

He also said as the Government was expediting the process of development in the State, the people should strengthen their unity and support the Government.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said the Muslim community should take steps and be proactive as they strive to improve themselves.

In his speech read by Tourism Minister Datuk Abang Johari Tun Abang Openg, Taib said it was the duty and responsibility of the Muslims to protect their religion so it would continue to be respected and held in high esteem by society.

Taib also said Muslims who were always quarrelling among themselves or having misunderstandings and confrontations with one another would certainly not be capable of becoming a united force.

In Johor Baru, the Sultan of Johor Sultan Iskandar opened the State-level Prophet Muhammad's birthday celebration at Masjid Abu Bakar.

About 2,500 people, including Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and State Assembly Speaker Datuk Zainalabidin Zain, attended the celebration.

In his speech, the Sultan urged the people to widen their knowledge of Islam and practise the doctrines so as to secure perpetual happiness.

He said the teachings in Al-Quran should be used as guidelines in living as it provides the basic principles to lead believers onto the right track.

In Kedah, a special procession in conjunction with the Maulidur Rasul celebrations was held at Universiti Utara Malaysia in Sintok, near Alor Star.

About 5,000 students and staff joined the procession which also included non-Muslim students from peninsular Malaysia as well as Sabah and Sarawak.

The procession was led by UUM new Vice-Chancellor Datuk Dr Ahmad Fawzi Mohd Basri who was joined by UUM deputy vice-chancellors, deans, professors and department heads.

Members of the procession were grouped into 35 contingents according to residential colleges, schools and departments of the university.

The celebrations then continued with a ceramah by Sheikh Abdul Hamid Tahir of Maktab Mahmud in Alor Star.

This was followed by a nasyid performance by Sufi Group from Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kedah (Insaniah).

In Kota Baru, a State-level Maulidul Rasul celebration will be held at the Muhammadi Mosque here tonight.

The celebration, organised by the Kelantan Religious and Malay Customs Council, will begin with the Maghrib prayers, followed by a religious talk and Isyak prayers.

A feast will be held for the congregation at the mosque after the Isyak prayers.