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PM: Empathy builds sense of community

CHANGLUN, Mon. - Malaysian Muslims must cultivate greater empathy towards the fate of their less fortunate brethren, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Speaking during the breaking of fast at the Kampung Lembah Palas mosque here, Dr Mahathir said such an attitude was an effective means of fostering closer unity among the community.

He cited the team of Malaysian doctors and volunteers whom he sent off yesterday from the Kuala Lumpur International Airport on a mercy mission to assist Afghanistan refugees in Pakistan.

Praising the team's willingness to assist less fortunate Muslims, Dr Mahathir said he realised the difficulties which the team would encounter during its mission, such as the cold weather and insanitary conditions at the refugee camps.

Dr Mahathir said he was thankful that many Malaysian Muslims and non-Muslims were willing to donate cash and kind to ease the sufferings of the victims of the conflict in Afghanistan.

"Only in such a way can we build a meaningful Islamic community, whereby the most important thing is the fostering of brotherhood," he said.

"If we are sincere in maintaining such bonds, we will become a solid society because we are united, and this will give us strength, and there will be no more possibility of us being attacked or oppressed by any party."

Dr Mahathir said if Malaysia's Muslim community could foster closer bonds during this fasting month, it would ensure that the country would be a source of respect among other nations.

"As such we can claim that Malaysia is an Islamic country, because we are able to conduct our religious obligations without any obstacles or oppression."

Dr Mahathir later presented cash donations to orphans and poor residents in the area.

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