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PM: Prosperity due to moderate attitude

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Malaysia is a peaceful and prosperous country due to the moderate attitude of the people, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the situation in the country and the hospitality of its people had impressed foreign leaders and visitors.

"Foreign leaders and visitors are awed by the peace and prosperity in Malaysia because other Islamic countries are not as peaceful, let alone develop rapidly," he said.

He was speaking at the presentation of donations to the poor and the breaking of fast at the Saidina Osman Al Affan Mosque at Bandar Tun Razak in Cheras today.

The programme was organised by the Federal Territory Umno liaison committee.

Present were the Prime Minister's wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Federal Territory Umno liaison committee chairman Senator Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor and its Wanita chief Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia was known for its moderate approach in line with the teachings of Islam.

"If Muslims hold strongly to their religious belief, Malaysia will remain peaceful and prosperous."

Dr Mahathir said there must be unity among the country's multiracial society which could be fostered by getting them involved in religious activities.

He said there were religious programmes which could be attended by followers of other religions like the breaking of fast.

"Indeed it is part of the religious obligations for Muslims, but other people too can join and eat together though they are not fasting. This can help create closer relations among the country's multiracial society and the country will continue to be peaceful and stable."

The Prime Minister noted that restaurants and hotels made preparation for the breaking of fast for their Muslim patrons which was even attended by the non-Muslims.

"What is interesting is that the non-Muslims do not take their food until it is time for the breaking of fast. This shows the respect among the people of various religious backgrounds, and because of this, there is no racial rift," he said.

"After 44 years of independence, Islam is still the official religion, yet the country's policies do not deprive the right to freedom of religion for the people," he added.

Likewise, he said when the Government announced that Malaysia is an Islamic state, it did not have any adverse affect on non-Muslims.

He also advised Muslims to be considerate to the problems faced by others who are less fortunate.

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