

05 MAR 2001

Mahathir-Aidiladha

SET ASIDE POLITICAL DIFFERENCES, DR M TELLS MUSLIMS

KUALA LUMPUR, March 5 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged Muslims in the country to set aside their political differences for the sake of maintaining harmony and unity in the Muslim community.

The Prime Minister said they should also sacrifice self-interest and show their realisation and gratefulness by uniting and enhancing the status of the religion and forging close ties with their friends of other races and religions.

"Let's together fulfil our duties and responsibilities as Muslims who abide by the teachings of Allah by closing ranks and forging ties among ourselves," he said in his Aidiladha message.

Urging Muslims to take the cue from the practice of sacrifice, he said it taught them to be thankful for the blessings bestowed upon them by Allah.

He said it also taught Muslims to sacrifice to help the poor and to show awareness for their fate by doing charity work so that the poor would not be marginalised.

Dr Mahathir said sacrifice in Islam also meant that Muslims should avoid being split so that they would always be protected and the status of Islam would continue to be safeguarded.

"We can see how disunity among Muslims in the world today has made us weak and easily oppressed.

"Most Islamic countries are not developed, are backward and poor and this made it difficult for us to protect fellow Muslims from being victimised by the enemies of Islam," he said.

However, Muslims in Malaysia were still a respected lot, he said.

Although the country had a big minority group of non-Muslims, they were willing to accept an administration headed by Muslims based on power sharing, he said.

"We can carry out our religious obligations in a peaceful and proper environment. This is a benefit which may not be enjoyed by the Muslim community in other places.

"Although we need to sympathise with and try to help them to the best of our ability, we should also not forget to be thankful for the blessings which Allah has given us," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims in the country were respected not because they were the majority but because they were a progressive, disciplined, efficient and knowledgeable community.

Dr Mahathir and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali wished Muslims Selamat Aidiladha.

"Let us pray together for our pilgrims in the Holy Land to perform their religious obligations smoothly, and hopefully their experience can be used to strengthen our faith," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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