

PM: Experts in Islam must not belittle others

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Pas degrading religion, says Dr Mahathir

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LANGKAWI, Fri. Experts in Islam must not belittle those trained in other fields as both groups play an equally important role in the development of Muslims, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Muslims, he said, would achieve development only if they were able to balance between the requirements of this world and the hereafter.

"If we hold to the teachings of the Quran, then surely we will be able to master a high level of knowledge.

"However, there are those who deliberately refuse to explain the true teachings of the Quran," said Dr Mahathir when opening the Langkawi Umno division annual delegates' conference here.

He said they also felt that knowledge in fields other than religion was secular.

"Actually, if no one possesses knowledge apart from the religious, these religious experts will not be able to survive."

Dr Mahathir also called upon Muslims to "oppose" (*melawan*) and "destroy" (*menghancurkan*) Pas because the party was weakening and splitting Muslims in the country.

He added that Pas supporters were committing sin because the party was attempting to destroy

Malay culture and twist the teachings of Islam to the extent of insulting and degrading the religion, the Prophet and even God.

"Before the advent of Pas, Muslims were united but after the party was established, they spread all sorts of teachings to split the Malays and win their support," Dr Mahathir said.

"Pas leaders who are committing this have forgotten that the Quran states how people who lead other Muslims astray are not only committing sin but will bear the sins of all those whom they have misguided," he added.

The Prime Minister went on to elaborate why Pas was twisting Islamic teachings, insulting the Prophet and even God and leading Muslims astray by teaching them not to be thankful to other people for the benefits received.

Dr Mahathir said Pas' tactics to call itself as an Islamic party would not prevent Muslims from seeing the truth.

"Many people use names (to describe what they want people to view them as), but what's in a name?

"The *Mat Saleh* always say, 'a rose by any other name is just as sweet'. And sometimes, we find something foul-smelling given the name of 'rose', but it still stinks.

"So although this party calls itself an Islamic party, they are not Islam. In fact, what Pas is doing is against Islam it is trying to split Muslims, deny the noble qualities

possessed by Muslims, and to misinterpret Islam."

The Umno president also advised members that Umno would remain relevant if the younger generation continued to have faith in the party.

Dr Mahathir said the older generation now holding power in the party must accept the participation of younger members.

"We among the older generation must welcome the participation of the younger ones, and in fact we must be willing to give places for them because we cannot remain forever (*tongkat langit*), sooner or later we must go."

He urged the older generation in the party not to be wary of them.

"Sometimes, we find we cannot get new members because there are branch chiefs who are uneasy with the younger generation as they could challenge the present leadership.

"This is especially when we see the younger generation better qualified. So we see them as a threat and try to block them from becoming party members.

"If we do this, Umno will in time erode, become irrelevant and die along with this generation which does not want to give up their positions to make way for the younger members."

To the younger generation in the party, Dr Mahathir advised them not to jostle for positions now taken up by the older generation.