

19 NOV 2002
Senate-Debate
DR MAHATHIR FOR UN SEC GEN

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 19 (Bernama) -- Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership capability in the international political arena has prompted a senator to suggest that the Prime Minister be appointed as the United Nations Secretary-General.

"When Dr Mahathir retires he should become the UN Secretary-General as the organisation needs a leader like him - good at handling security issues, given the current world situation," Senator Datuk Ghazi @ Hasbullah Ramli said at the 2003 Budget debates in Dewan Negara today.

Ghazi, confident that others outside the country would support the idea, said this proposal would enable Islam to return to its former glory.

He said, if the proposal materialised, then Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi should be appointed as the Organisation of Islamic Conference Secretary-General.

This would enhance efforts in overcoming the travails faced by Muslims - especially terrorism that is today commonly associated with Islam, Ghazi said.

On biotechnology research, Ghazi suggested this needed upgrading so that we too could find solutions for diseases especially HIV/AIDS.

"Bangladesh conducts various biotechnology research and has numerous students with doctoral degrees in this field. So, it's not impossible for us to train our young in that direction, too," he said adding that both the education and health ministries needed to focus on the matter.

He also said Islamic countries can merge Islam with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to prosper further.

"The RM1.6 billion allocation for this in the 2003 Budget would be meaningless if there aren't any efforts to learn the methods of other developed countries," he added.

On another matter, Senator Siti Zailah Mohd Yusoff called for stiffer penalties for husbands who neglected their responsibly, and whipping for wife beaters.

She also said the rising divorce rates had negative impact on children and indirectly contributed to juvenile delinquency.

Siti Zaliha suggested that the government grant leave to staff who had to care for their seriously ill parents so that they need not solely depend on maids.

Meanwhile, the soon-to-retire Senator Datuk Haji Ahmad Ismail said a post-mortem should be conducted to determine ways to overcome poverty in Malaysia as there are weaknesses in the action plans undertaken by government agencies.

Instead of 'breaking records' in minor undertakings it is better to focus our attention on upgrading the life of the hardcore poor as this was a social 'time-bomb' waiting to explode, he said.

He also said we are slacking as a caring society.

Dewan continues tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

HK PC