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Mahathir-Malays

MALAYSIA'S MALAYS MAY BECOME A MINORITY LIKE IN SPORE- DR M

MELAKA, Oct 3 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's Malays may become a minority group like the Malays in Singapore if they continue to quarrel among themselves and do not work hard, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Malays in this country were at one time nearly reduced to the same fate of the Singapore Malays, a minority race, but fortunately they were saved by the 1930 depression, he said.

"If not for the economic depression in 1930 when many Chinese and Indians kept returning to their own countries up to 1945, the number of Malays will be smaller than the other races...we (Malays) nearly lost Malaya," he said.

In 1925, 26, 27, the number of Malays was smaller than the foreign immigrant races who came to Malaya to work in the tin mines and rubber estates as they saw the economic opportunities in this country, he said during a dialogue held in conjunction with the third "Malay and Islamic World Convention" at Tanjung Keling here.

Dr Mahathir said Malays at that time did not want to take advantage of the employment opportunities that were grasped by the immigrant races.

History should serve as a lesson to the Malays in this country and hence they should work hard to ensure their excellence in all fields.

"We should be better than the others. Even if we are kulis we should be better kulis than the other kulis," he said.

"I am not asking Malays to become kulis," he added.

Earlier a participant from Singapore asked the Malaysian Prime Minister to give advice to the Singapore Malays.

Dr Mahathir said the Malays in Singapore like the Malays in this country should strive to become better than the other races.

Even though there were groups which claimed that the Singapore Malays were better off than Malaysia's Malays "but the fact as can be seen now is that Singapore Malays are not given the opportunity to hold high posts in various fields such as the military," Dr Mahathir said.

Speaking at a media conference later, he said Malays in this country frequently quarrelled among themselves perhaps because they felt safe in this country.

"They feel safe and when they feel safe, they want to quarrel," he said.

Asked if the government's move to "pamper" the Malays with all kinds of aid had persuaded them to adopt this attitude, the Prime Minister said the government was not pampering the Malays but was helping them.

He said Malays, however, were misusing the aid given to them and some of them opposed the well-meant efforts of the government that were made for the good of the race.

"Each time we want to do something for the good of the Malays, there are other Malays who oppose this."

"For instance, we are aware of the importance of acquiring modern knowledge. When we try to encourage the mastering of modern knowledge, some people come along and say...this is secular and Malays should instead focus on Islamic teachings."

"In view of this, Malays do not have the abilities, they are inefficient and will surely become poor and weak and will be oppressed by other people," Dr Mahathir said.

Dr Mahathir said the policy of using English to teach science and maths

in schools from next year was an effort being made by the government for the good of the Malay race.

It was impossible to translate all books and journals in the field of science, for instance, into Bahasa Melayu and if the Malays did not master English, the Malays would continue to languish.

Dr Mahathir said if the Malays learnt English they would have access to all sources of knowledge but there were some who accused the government of not loving Bahasa Melayu.

"In fact we love Bahasa Melayu. However no one will care two hoots about the language of a race which is weak and not progressive. On the other hand the language of a progressive race will be much sought after by other people and we ourselves will also be much sought after."

The English Language is important now just like Arabic which was a language of knowledge at one time and even Jewish scholars also wrote in Arabic for during that period people seeking knowledge had to learn Arabic.

"I went to English school right from primary level to the time when I qualified as a doctor. I did not become an Englishman. I am a Malay even more Malay than some people who call themselves Malay," he said.

On possible exemptions to be given to certain schools over the use of English, the Prime Minister said the government had not made any final decision on such exemptions.

During the dialogue the Prime Minister also said Muslims had failed to use oil found in their countries as a weapon to protect Islamic interests.

This was because among oil producer nations themselves there was no pact to control production and prices.

Opening the convention the Prime Minister said Malays and Muslims were being attacked and oppressed not because they were in the wrong but because they were weak.

Hence they should strengthen themselves by mastering knowledge so that they could strive on their own to expand their economy and build defence equipment to defend their countries and Muslims.

-- BERNAMA

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