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Mahathir-Islam

MUSLIMS MUST EXCEL IN SCIENCE AND MATHS: DR MAHATHIR

From Zulkefli Salleh

RIYADH, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said there is a need for Muslim countries to produce workers who are highly educated in science and mathematics in order not to be left behind in the information and communication technology (ICT).

The Prime Minister said ICT was the driving force for economic progress in this era of information age and the two subjects were not alien to Muslims as the Arabs had excelled in them in the past.

He said it was the Muslims who pioneered modern science but unfortunately at a certain stage the Muslim turned their backs on science and mathematics.

"Since then their civilisation has declined and until today they are among the least educated and least advanced people in the world," he said in his keynote address at a seminar on the future of Saudi economy here.

Dr Mahathir, who is on a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia, said: "I venture to say that in neglecting these essential subjects they have actually disregarded the injunctions of Islam to seek knowledge and to be prepared with the necessary strength to protect themselves and their religion."

Be that as it may, he said the fact was that today Muslims could not neglect science and mathematics if they wanted to avoid being weak and oppressed.

The total human resources of the Muslim countries must be fully educated in science and mathematics, he said.

In this regard, Dr Mahathir said Muslims also could not exclude their women if they wanted to maximise their productive potential.

"The future of Saudi Arabia is no exception. Your magnificent surgeons have proven to the world their skills. I am sure in the field of I.T., Saudi Arabia can excel in the future if it sets about producing the required human resources," said Dr Mahathir.

He was alluding to the success of a team of Saudi surgeons headed By Dr Abdullah Al-Rabeeah in separating Malaysian Siamese conjoined twins who shared several organs including the bowel and liver.

Dr Mahathir lamented that there were Muslims who believed that being modern and advanced meant being unIslamic, forgetting the modernising effect of Islam on the Jahiliah Arabs.

He said Islam would have continued to modernise the Muslim world and cause if at a particular stage Muslim had not turned away from modernisation in favour of recreating the world of the first years of Hijrah.

Dr Mahathir stressed that modernisation need not lead to atheism, to Godlessness, as was happening in the West and indeed Islamic modernisation could achieve a balance between this world and the hereafter "as we always appeal for in our prayers to God".

--BERNAMA

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