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PM's moves enhances nation's image among ummah

SHAH ALAM, Wed. - Malaysia's Islamic diplomacy reached new heights under Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations director-general Datuk Dr Mohd Yusof Ahmad said today.

"A staunch believer in liberal, moderate and progressive Islam, Dr Mahathir is seen pushing for more dynamic and activist Islamic policy orientation at the bilateral and multilateral levels within the region and internationally.

"This has enhanced Malaysia's image and credibility among the Ummah and the non-Muslim world," he said at the closing of the seminar on Understanding Malaysia as an Islamic Nation here by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo.

In the wake of the Sept 11's negative ramifications on Islam and Muslims the world over, Mohd Yusof said Malaysia's active efforts to correct Western misconceptions of Islam were manifested through recent initiatives to foster greater dialogues between Islam and the non-Muslim world.

"This was evident from Dr Mahathir's visits to the United States, the Vatican and Europe this year," he said.

Malaysia's Islamic diplomacy, in this respect, also bore fruit when the country was acknowledged by the non-Muslim world as a model Islamic state.

He also said Islam had remained an important component of Malaysia's foreign policy since independence.

Director-general of the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia Datuk Dr Abdul Monir Yaacob called for the Syarak Administrative Law and Syariah Court in Malaysia to undergo a complete and harmonised reformation.

At present, it could be seen that there were on-going efforts to elevate the status of the Syariah Court and the Syarak law.

At the closing, Dr Mohd Khir warned that over-reaction would weaken the Muslims while fanaticism would threaten the country's security and unity.

In this respect, he said, the Selangor Government had introduced a programme called "Bina Insan" (Human Development) to instil high moral values among the people.