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Mahathir-Maulud

STRIVE TO RESTORE ISLAMIC EXCELLENCE, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 25 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged Muslims in Malaysia to make efforts to restore Islamic excellence and develop themselves to be on par with or better than other communities.

The Prime Minister said they should also adhere to the true teachings of Islam to uplift the status of Muslims and the religion.

The religion of Islam propagated by Prophet Muhammad in the past had produced a strong and excellent Muslim community who had built Islam's greatest empire stretching from China in the East to Spain in the West, he said.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims succeeded in doing this because they held fast to the true teachings of the religion, possessed great fighting spirit, were determined in the pursuit of knowledge and worked hard to develop themselves, the community, religion and country.

"Unfortunately, this excellence could not be sustained. The emphasis on religious matters and rejection of other fields not related to religion had caused Muslims to be left behind in various aspects," he said in his message in the Maulidur Rasul souvenir programme.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims should not waste time debating the question of who among them were more Islamic.

He said they should also refrain from labelling fellow Muslims as infidels as this would only divide and weaken the Muslim community in the country.

"If we choose to continue to live in factions, then we will be like the Arabs before the arrival of Islam," he said.

This year's Maulidur Rasul celebration, themed "Together We Cherish the Beauty of Islam", was launched by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil here today.

Meanwhile, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin, in his speech, said Prophet Muhammad had interpreted Islam as a simple religion, preaching love among its followers, tolerance and the importance of knowledge.

"Knowledge should also be accompanied by strong morals, a healthy culture, noble traits and courtesy which can enhance the image of Islam. Many people are knowledgeable but commit many moral mistakes," he said.

At the ceremony, eight people received this year's Maulidur Rasul Award for their contributions to society and the excellence of their work.

They are Kol Dr Jaseemuddeen Abu Bakar, Acting Sjn Mej Mohamed Abdul Manap, Dr Fatanah Mohamed, Chang Hon Fong, Mohamad Shafii Jemiran, Hj Md Adnan Md Daud, Hj Mustaffa Ibrahim and M. Saraswathy.

They each received RM2,000, a plaque, a certificate, religious books and other prizes.

Seven of the teams which took part in a procession at the venue were adjudged the winners in various categories.

The winners include the Primary Industries Ministry for government department category, Bank Rakyat (private sector), Kuala Lumpur City Hall (statutory body) and Putrajaya Section 16 Surau (non-governmental organisation).

The others are the Dusun Youth Skills Training Institute (institution of higher learning), Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Bandar Tun Razak (school) and Malaysia Airlines (special).

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