

27 SEP 2003

Thinker-Mahathir

DR MAHATHIR ELIGIBLE TO BE CALLED 21ST CENTURY ISLAMIC THINKER

ALOR STAR, Sept 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is eligible for the moniker "21st Century Islamic Thinker" for his visions and agendas, an Information Ministry officer said today.

Special Affairs Department director-general Datuk Zainal Abidin Abdul Kadir said Dr Mahathir's visions were not only practicable for the future but were also models for countries which sought the expansion of and respect towards Islam.

The implementation of Dr Mahathir's ideas allowed Malaysia to be recognised as an Islamic country by world religious personalities and most Islamic countries, he said.

"Dr Mahathir's global ideas have made Malaysia harmonious and calm because the people of various races can live in peace," he said when met at a seminar entitled "Dr Mahathir, 21st Century Islamic Thinker" here.

The one-day seminar, organised by the Kedah branch of the department, was launched by State Secretary Datuk Ku Nahar Ku Ibrahim on behalf of Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain.

Malaysia was respected and emulated as Dr Mahathir's true focus was on Islam and not merely on a religion which practised petty rituals which made it weak, he said.

"Almost 75 per cent of the world's riches is in Islamic countries but most of the leaders failed to make their countries, and Islam, respected," he said.

He said an Islamic thinker was not necessarily from among the "ulama" as one had to contribute many benefits to a country aside from being part of the administration of the country and religion.

As an example, he said Islam's second caliph, Saidina Omar Al-Khatab, introduced administration principles, including economic and social concerns, which were interpreted from the Al-Quran and Hadith.

Zainal Abidin, however, said he was disappointed with people who were envious of Dr Mahathir's success and opposed him merely because of differences in opinion and political stands.

Papers presented at the seminar include "The Tajdid Concept and Dr Mahathir's Islamic Thinking: An Analysis" by Associate Prof Dr Rahimin Affandi Abdul Rahman from Universiti Malaya and "Umno's Contribution to National Education" by Prof Dr Muda Ismail Abdul Rahman from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

-- BERNAMA

ZA MAN PR EMK