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Mahathir-religion

REVIEW IS TO STRENGTHEN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS CURRICULUM, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Islamic religious curriculum needs to be reviewed to strengthen it by focusing on the basics of the teachings of Islam, not the stress on secondary matters.

The Prime Minister said it was discovered that many of the teachings of Islam were not given due attention or emphasis in the lesson given to the students.

"We discussed this in depth and we discovered that the focus was on the non basics, matters that are secondary in Islam," he said after chairing the Umno Supreme Council (MT) meeting here today.

Dr Mahathir gave as an example the attention on matters of attire such as whether a white or red "kopiah" (untasselled fez) was the well preferred in Islam, instead of the teachings on religious obligations compulsory in Islam.

He said that as a result the students did not benefit fully from their Islamic religious lesson in schools and also when they grew up.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno President, said the contents of Islamic religious lesson in national schools would focus on the basics in Islam.

"We also feel that Arabic, for those wishing to pursue further studies in Islam, should be introduced earlier...but this will be considered when we formulate the new curriculum for national schools," he said.

To a question, he said the government would also study the approach to Islamic education as practised in Johor, as well as its contents.

"We will review the curriculum to ensure that Islamic religious lesson will be more effective in moulding Islamic personality," he said.

He said an individual who studied Islam would become a good and successful person.

He said the "azan" not only called on Muslims to perform prayers as interpreted by certain people but also a call to achieve success.

"It invites Muslims to achieve success in their lives but this group of people has a narrow interpretation of success, that is success in prayers only," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the MT was also proud to note the success of Puteri Umno in holding its assembly recently and everyone including divisional heads should accept the fact that the Puteri wing just like the Women and Youth wings were part and parcel of Umno, having the role to make Umno's struggle a success.

He wanted Puteri Umno members to be given adequate training in a more effective way to enable them to play their role effectively.

-- BERNAMA

MNY AZH ABG