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Mahathir-Drill

CONDUCT EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI DRILLS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 31 (Bernama) -- Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today suggested that the authorities conduct earthquake and tsunami drills to prepare the people in the event of such natural disasters.

He said Malaysians were not well informed on how to react when struck by earthquakes or tsunamis.

"The problem in Malaysia is that we do not understand the tsunami as the big waves have never struck us before (Dec 26)," he said during a question and answer session with 26 Japanese high school students who are on a three-day visit to Malaysia.

Citing the tsunami on Dec 26 last year, which killed nearly 280,000 people largely from coastal communities in the region, Tun Dr Mahathir said the huge number of casualties was because people were ill-informed about such natural disaster.

"The public should be informed that a tsunami is likely to occur after a major earthquake so that they are aware of such calamity," he said.

"There were people still collecting fish which were scattered along the beach when tsunami waves hit the coastlines (last December). People thought it was a normal day but suddenly huge waves hit the shore, 100 times bigger than the normal waves," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the government must also give fast and correct information to the public by broadcasting through television and radio.

He also called on Japan, which has the expertise and technical knowledge, to share its information with other Asian countries on how to respond when an earthquake or tsunami strikes.

-- BERNAMA

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