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Mahathir-East

MAHATHIR TELLS MALAYSIA TO LOOK EAST FOR PROGRESS

Serdang, Aug 5 (Bernama) -- If Malaysia wants to progress further, it should learn from the successful Eastern nations and not copy from the West which is losing its lustre, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Citing economic giants like Japan, South Korea and emerging economic powerhouses like China and India, Dr Mahathir said these countries had proven track records of achieving economic development even before the Europeans and Americans industrialised.

In contrast, he said, the West, where moral values were eroding, was not a suitable model for Malaysia to follow.

"We cannot take the European or the Western model if we want to progress. If we choose their model, we will be regressing like them. The European and the Western model is not a suitable model.

"I believe civilisation has flowed towards the East. Progressive nations are in the East and not in the West," he said in his lecture themed "Moving Towards A Progressive Society" at Universiti Putra Malaysia here.

The lecture series was organised by the Rashid Foundation.

He said many Asian countries, despite their economic success, managed to maintain their moral codes, which was important for developing a healthy society.

"They are rapidly developing. The people are well-educated, acquiring the latest technologies and have tremendous capacity to train and to develop their economies. They have mastered skills and technology to be ahead of the West," he said.

China, for example, had reserves worth US\$1 trillion and was becoming a powerful and rich nation in the world, he added.

However, he cautioned that Malaysia should not copy everything from the East as they too had some shortcomings.

He advised Muslims to rely on the Quran if they want to achieve progress as it offers plenty of guidance towards acquiring knowledge -- a crucial tool for development.

"Muslims should not reject Islam, even if they want progress. The Hadith has a lot of guidance for progress, it tells us to acquire knowledge," he said, adding that the Muslim world was once the cradle of knowledge and able to produce renowned scientists and academics.

While science and mathematics were important tools for progress, he said, women should also be allowed to play their role in society.

"If Muslims want progress, you can't tell the women to stay in the kitchen, then you are halving your strength," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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