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Abdullah: Pay no heed to biased views against Islam

DEPUTY Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Muslims should not heed the views of those who are clearly biased against Islam.

Referring to criticism levelled against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for remarks made in his speech at the opening of the OIC summit on Thursday, Abdullah said the focus should be on developing Muslims and restoring the image of the religion, which had been tarnished.

"Dr Mahathir has repeatedly said that he is not against any race, including the Jews.

"This is what he told me and told many others," he said, at a Press conference after bilateral meetings with heads of delegation from nine countries, on the sidelines of the summit yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, in his speech, urged Muslims to learn from the Jews, whom he said "ruled the world by proxy" after having "gained control of the most powerful countries".

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir, in relating past examples of victories by Muslims, only wanted his audience to reflect and take stock of their situation today.

"He only spoke on what had happened and what he saw," Abdullah said.

He added that the Prime Minister's speech was in keeping with the theme of the summit, which is "Knowledge and morality for the progress of Ummah".

Abdullah said Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad had touched on Dr Mahathir's speech and the President had also told him what other leaders thought about the speech.

Abdullah also said that all the heads of delegation had thanked and congratulated Malaysia for a job well done in organising the summit.

He said he was proud of the success, but said that the success was not only for Malaysia but also for other Islamic countries.

Abdullah said the bilateral meetings concentrated mostly on commerce and investments in OIC countries.

"This is a very good indication that OIC member countries are prepared to develop their economies.

"I am happy with this progress because this shows that we are eager to develop the Ummah because only when we are developed can we be strong," he said.

Abdullah also said that all the heads of delegation expressed their admiration for Dr Mahathir and his success in developing Malaysia into a successful Islamic nation.

"They also said that they would extend their co-operation to me in jointly developing Islam and repair the image of Islam, when I take over from Dr Mahathir," he said, adding that Malaysia was prepared to share its experience with others.