

## Tun Dr M to Muslims: Don't go overboard

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CYBERJAYA: Former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called upon Muslims not to go overboard with their reactions on the comments made by Pope Benedict XVI linking Islam with violence. He said the reaction by Muslims should not go to the extent of them getting physical about it. "It should not (be) to the point of burning embassies and like that," he told reporters today (Sept 22, 2006) after delivering a talk at the Multimedia University here titled "Universities For Vision 2020". On improving the relations with Muslims following the statement of the Pope, Mahathir said more should be done (by the Vatican) instead of just pointing fingers.

Earlier in his talk, Mahathir said a university which promotes and inculcates a desire to learn among its students will be at the forefront of becoming a premier university.

"A university should be a place not only where knowledge is acquired but where such knowledge is increased," he said. Thus, in order to achieve this, research papers and studies conducted on various branches of academia, particularly Science, are quite essential to achieve this first class status, he said.

"In 2020, a quality university is not a place to obtain a degree, but a place where you can gain and seek more knowledge," he said. Mahathir added that in 2020 when the country would have achieved a developed status, the universities themselves must strive for this goal, so as not to be left behind.

Another point, he said, which must be developed is for there to be a free flow of discussions not only among the academia fraternity itself but also between academicians and students on the various subjects being taught. This, Mahathir said, should be aimed particularly at the various science branches, which have seen tremendous development and progress and which he believes should be the one targeted due to its immense future potential.

He also said that universities in the future should be more focussed and specialised instead of attempting to be involved in all areas of academia as it is the case now.

"Now they are Jack of all trades but master of none," he said. Mahathir also called for universities to be more research orientated, particularly involving pure research, instead of concentrating on applied research. He added the commercial application following pure research will eventually follow if society adopts it. He cited, Genetically Modified Food as one area Malaysian universities could be involved in order to reap their commercial benefits later.

"Imagine the reputation of the university which develops a genetically modified food acceptable to all," he said. Mahathir also hoped that with improving academia quality, the country would be able to produce its first Noble Laureate by the year 2020.

Source: The Sun, Malaysia