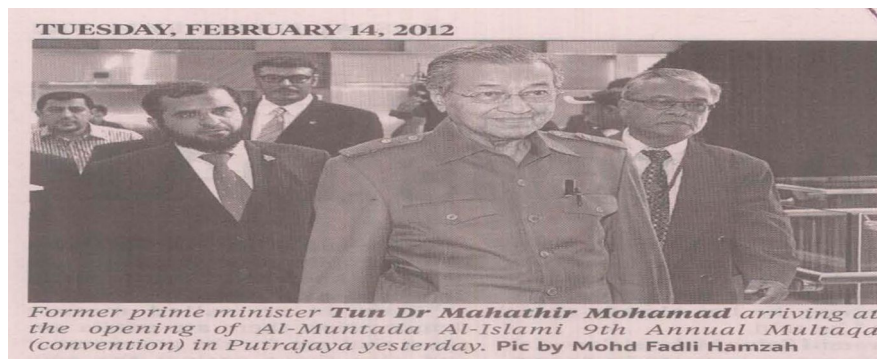


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'Good govt must care

RIGHT-THING: Leaders expected to provide good life, says Dr M

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THE government of a Muslim country must provide good governance for its people, said former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said it was all about doing the right thing and avoiding actions or decisions that were damaging or a hindrance to the progress of the people.

"A good government must always care for the people. The leader is expected to lead the people and provide them with a good life," he said in his keynote address, "Good Governance, Viable Investment Climate, Sound Philosophy", at the opening of Al-Muntada Al-Islami 9th Annual Multaqa (convention) yesterday.

The three-day convention, which ends today, is organised by Al-Muntada, in collaboration with IFP Advisors Group JVMalaysia.

The Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust, an organisation originally established in the United Kingdom to cater for local communities, has centres worldwide.

Dr Mahathir said the first thing a leader must do was to create an environment that was conducive to the people to have a good life and the means to make a living.

Citing Malaysia as an example, Dr Mahathir said at the time of independence, 70 per cent of the workforce were unemployed and, thus, the government provided income by switching from agriculture to industry.

"The government wanted to create jobs for the people. We decided to open doors to industrialisation because one acre of land for an industry or factory can provide jobs for 500 people or more."

But, at that time, he said Malaysia did not have the technology, capital and market knowledge.

"The government decided to make the country attractive to foreign and local investors. Foreign investors have the technology, world market access, management and capital.

"Only labour-intensive industries were chosen and the unemployed were employed.

"Foreign investors came to invest as the government did not collect income or corporate tax at that time and workers were trained to work in factories and manufacture goods instead of tapping rubber or farming padi."

Addressing some 80 foreign delegates, he said the strategy was successful in creating jobs and, eventually, Malaysia had to import workers because so many jobs were created through foreign investments.

"The government decided to make the country attractive to foreign and local investors."
Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad
former prime minister