

Sultan Mizan Calls On All Groups To Respect Islam As Nation's Official Religion
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KUALA TERENGGANU, Dec 14 (Bernama) -- The Sultan of Terengganu, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, today called on all quarters to continue respecting Islam as the country's official religion in order to preserve harmony among the people.

The Sultan said the action of some irresponsible groups who tried to create issues out of this, had caused uneasiness among Muslims in the country.

"History had proven that a government administration based on the teachings of Islam had never denied justice for the other communities or groups although they were from different races and religions.

"For example, Terengganu was the first state to accept Islam, based on the discovery of the Batu Bersurat (Inscribed Stone) in Kuala Berang.

"Since then, Islam has been the religion of the majority of the people in Terengganu but at the same time, the others are free to practise their own religion for as long as they do not jeopardise peace in the state."

Sultan Mizan said this at an audience with Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Said, state executive councillors and members of royalty at Istana Maziah, here.

Also present were the Sultanah of Terengganu Sultanah Nur Zahirah and the Yang Di-Pertuan Muda Terengganu Tengku Muhammad Ismail.

Sultan Mizan who has just ended his term as the 13th Yang di-Pertuan Agong, said unity among Muslims could help protect Islam's sanctity and act as a strong fortress against attempts to belittle the religion.

He also urged all quarters to observe and study the conditions around them to build strength in facing current and future challenges.

The Sultan said present developments in a borderless world required the government to be proactive in tackling local issues following the free flow of information through the Internet, the policy of liberalisation as demanded by investors, increasing legal and illegal immigration, and the spread of foreign culture with its implications on the local populace.

Sultan Mizan urged the state government to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of the people, and to be always ready with sound formulas to deal with the impact and implications of the changing environment.

The Sultan also called on the people to increase their knowledge and expertise in such fields as medicine, agriculture and economics.

Sultan Mizan said he was grateful for the progress and development achieved by Terengganu in various fields, especially education, sports and economy while he was away from the state, carrying out his duties as Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

The Sultan said the achievements were the result of close cooperation between the state executive council led by the Menteri Besar, the Council of Regency and the Dewan Pangkuan Di-Raja Terengganu that supported the reign of his son, Tengku Muhammad Ismail, while he was away from the state.

At the ceremony, Sultan Mizan also conferred the first-class royal award, the Pingat Darjah Kerabat DiRaja Terengganu Yang Amat Mulia Darjah Yang Pertama (DKR) on Tengku Muhammad Ismail.

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