

**Mahad Tahfiz Curriculum Should Be Streamlined Across The Country - Ahmad Zahid
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ALOR GAJAH, 9 Jan (Bernama) -- The curriculum of 'mahad tahfiz' (Al-Quran memorising centres) across the country needs to be standardised to produce outstanding professional 'huffaz' (memorisers' of the Quran) who are able to contribute to the development of the country, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said that the standardisation of curriculum would prevent the disorganisation of mahad tahfiz education system in the country and create a syllabus that was much more effective.

"I, as the DPM (Deputy Prime Minister) strongly encourage the formation of more mahad tahfiz by the state and federal governments, private institutions or individuals.

"But I urge these school operators to have a special curriculum to be used across the country...there are also derelict cottages, abandoned bungalows being used as mahads, it is not that we do not want more huffaz, but we also want to have quality, as well as Quranic and academic values," he said.

He said this during the launch of the graduation ceremony for an Al-Quran memorising programme at SM Imtiaz Ulul Albab at Masjid Tanah here, Saturday. A total of 76 huffaz were given certificates and awards for successfully completing the programme - that is memorising the Qur'an in three months.

Also present were his wife Datin Seri Hamida Khamis; Tourism and Culture Deputy Minister Datuk Mas Ermieyati Samsudin; Senator Tan Sri Mohd Ali Rustam; and State Education, Higher Education, Science and Technology, Green Technology and Innovation Committee chairman Datuk Md Yunus Husin.

Ahmad Zahid called on the federal and state governments as well as related parties to coordinate the upkeep of these memorising institutions and their students, so that the students were not 'oppressed' in their efforts to gain knowledge.

"In addition to seeking 'pahala' (rewards) do not oppress or brush aside the rights of these children to live after becoming huffaz, they should also have the best of academic and economic values," he said.

As such, he did not want the huffaz in the country just become imams or lead prayers alone, but also be moulded into professionals who were highly knowledgeable with verses from the Quran.

"I want them to be engineers, part of the Armed Forces, an Inspector-General of Police who could become an imam (during prayers), become a preacher who reads sermons not only Fridays but also on Hari Raya," he said.

Commenting on the the huffaz produced by the school, Ahmad Zahid said he was proud because since 2010, the school was able to produce candidates of quality who received offers from 20 leading universities in the world.

"Alhamdulillah, thanks to the commitment of my wife and her siblings...we have succeeded, Allah has tested my wife and I, we know tests after tests will come, nothing is easy (we need to) work extra hard and smart, it's difficult to achieve success, but it's even more difficult to sustain it," he said.

Ahmad Zahid and his wife were the founders of the school.

Meanwhile, he said Muslims should be open to cooperation with non-Muslims in an effort to seek knowledge to develop themselves and Muslim communities around the world.

He said the effort was not about the differences in religion, race, ethnicity, cultural background, but a collaboration towards a common goal.

"I think to be successful there must be close cooperation, irrespective of religion, race and ethnicity," he said.

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