

Total freedom is 'alien to Islam'

NST 25 NOV 1981

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said today Islam does not elevate the absolute freedom of the individual into an "article of faith" as it is presently being regarded in Western countries.

He added that the concept of total and absolute individual freedom has no place in a Muslim community.

"The Muslim individual is enjoined to relate himself to Allah and to the community in which he lives," he said when opening the International Conference of the 15th Century Hijra here.

The Prime Minister stressed that a good Muslim must consider the interests and the good of the community before doing anything. He added that the community had the right to protect

itself from individuals who were out to mislead it.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir pointed out that Western concepts of the rights of individuals had resulted in the destruction of moral values.

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Thus the phenomenon of streakers who run naked in public as a demonstration of the freedom of the individual.

"Such is the value placed on individual rights that the public do not feel scandalised by such behaviour. Instead, the newspapers report this event with glee," he added.

He said the Western community did not really do anything to prevent depravity. "Everyone it seems should be allowed to do their own thing," he added.

The Prime Minister stressed that there were codes of behaviour which must be adhered to in the Islamic community.

"Similarly, in the teaching or propagation of Islam, the Muslim community has a duty to ensure that individualistic and perverted teachings which are

damaging are not allowed to go on unchecked," he said.

He also warned that there were people who would like to mislead and confuse Muslims and even destroy their faith in Islam.

"A lot of books on Islam are written by Zionists and others and these people have no intention to propagate it," he said.

"At the same time there are a lot of Muslims whose knowledge of their religion is minimal. The consequence of allowing everyone to preach Islam could be confusion and loss of faith among those who are unable to distinguish between what is right and wrong," he stressed.

He pointed out there were also those whose preachings of Islam were directed towards other objectives adding that

for them, wrong interpretations were of minor considerations as long as they achieved their real objectives.

"The result would be to pollute the teachings of Islam with extraneous matters or even to render Muslims unIslamic," he added.