

Reject the extremists

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad

today called on Muslims in the country to reject extremists and deviationists and to hold fast to the true teachings and spirit of Islam.

In a Hari Raya message to the nation carried over Radio and Television Malaysia tonight, he urged Muslims to use the fasting period for the moulding of responsible, tolerant and considerate personalities.

Dr Mahathir said although Malaysia has a multi-racial population, the country had, to date, not faced many problems.

Muslims, he said, should be thankful because although

though they only constituted half the population, they pressed for their legitimate rights.

"In fact, we hold the reins of power and can generally determine our own future," he said.

The Prime Minister said there were, however, some Muslims in the country who were not thankful for being spared the problems, difficulties and hardships faced by people in some parts of the world.

Open house

They had become arrogant and forgotten their situation as they thought that the standing and influence of Muslims in the country was guaranteed and could be taken for granted.

"These people wish to use

their influence in carrying out their activities in the name of Islam while the teaching and tenets of Islam," he said.

Dr Mahathir said they were guided by their arrogance and lustful wishes and not by Islamic rules or doctrine.

Some felt that the traditional Malaysian practice of holding open house during festivals such as Hari Raya Puasa and Hari Raya Haji were not in accordance with Islamic teachings.

They were of the opinion that there was no place for non-Muslims in the lives of Muslims and as such non-Muslims should not visit Muslims and vice-versa.

"Such narrow interpretations are not limited to these matters only. There are religious teachers who forbid children eating food prepared by newly converted women, giving the excuse that they were not sure if the food was halal," he said.

In schools, children with Islamic names are called on them to prove in their lives the noble characteristics which would make Muslims examples for others.

The Prime Minister said these things hardly occurred in the past but were increasingly commonplace now and if allowed to continue would lead to interpretations and actions which could disturb the peace and harmony among Malaysians.

He said a sad fact was that these people carried