

PM: Some Muslims use fast to be idle

By FIZI AHMAD
NST 29 MAY 1985
KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — There are Muslims who use the fasting month as an excuse to be "extremely idle", Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

"These Muslims say fasting is a hindrance to their normal activities and that it therefore permits them to indulge in limitless relaxation," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir also praised Muslims who were ready to use their spare time during the Ramadhan month to listen to the readings of the Quran and make efforts to understand its teachings.

"Their use of time towards this purpose is highly commendable compared to those Muslims who only relax at home with the excuse that fasting prohibits them from normal activities."

He was speaking during a visit to the Stadium Merdeka to inspect the preparations to hold the 27th international *Musabaqah* (Quran-reading competition).

He was also briefed on this year's competition and the state of preparations by the committee chairman, Datuk Seri

Haji Kamaruddin Mohamad Isa.

The Prime Minister, who was accompanied by his wife, also strolled into the middle of the stadium's pitch to take a closer look at the main pavillion being put up by the JKR.

This year's pavillion was designed by architect Roslan Hashim from the JKR's headquarters. It costs \$140,000.

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Dr Mahathir added that the *Musabaqah*, which has been held since Malaysia achieved independence, had at-

tracted the attention of not only Muslims in Malaysia but also the international Muslim community which has been sending more and more readers to participate.

"This shows that our efforts to hold the *Musabaqah* are respected by a large portion of Muslims worldwide.

"Therefore we do not have to worry about the allegation by certain quarters that the *Musabaqah* is pointless and a waste of time.

"To me, it draws my spirit nearer to the Quran, as I listen to its verses, and what it teaches, and I believe this is experienced by other Muslims as well."