

PROVE IT CAN WORK: P M

2 AUG 1985

By KALIMULLAH HASSAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told Muslims today not to expect businesses based on Islamic principles to succeed automatically.

"It is still the ability of the management which determines whether a business fails or succeed," he said.

"I hope we will not waste our efforts shouting slogans which sound nice to the ears but empty in content. Instead, we should go gradually forward in implementing Islamic principles.

"It is also no use hitting out at other systems."

He said the Government's emphasis on Islamic values in business offered Muslims a chance to prove the system worked "not only for Muslims but other communities also."

"And it is important that we prove the Islamic system can fulfil the needs of not only the Muslims but other communities as well," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the launching of Syarikat Takaful Malaysia, an insurance company based on Islamic principles.

He said while Islamic values were beneficial to all communities, non-Muslims could not be forced to abide by these principles.

"However, if they choose to abide by these principles, (they) will be encouraged," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the application of Islamic principles and values in business was still in its infancy.

He said Muslims were well versed in performing religious functions such as prayers, fasting and paying tithes.

"Unfortunately, they have failed in the application of Islamic principles to businesses unlike the days of Prophet Muhammad," he said and blamed this on the lack of experience in business.

He said it was only in recent years that Muslims had succeeded in breaking ground in business.

Dr Mahathir, however, pointed out that knowledge of only Islamic tenets would not enable Muslims to succeed in business.

"We still need expertise in management of labour, finance, law and modern machinery," he said.

He added that ventures into Islamic-based businesses were in their pioneering stage. "It is at this stage that application of Islamic principles and values to business will be put to the test."

Also present were Finance Minister Daim Zainuddin and Agriculture Minister Anwar Ibrahim who is also chairman of the Islamic Consultative Body.

The company, which is the 10th one set up in the world since 1979, begins business tomorrow.