

# Non-Muslims do not fear true Islam: PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Non-Muslims in Malaysia do not fear true Islam and the Islamic values the Government seeks to inculcate, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister, in an interview published in the latest issue of *Arabia, the Islamic World Review*, said non-Muslims, rather, accepted such Islamic values.

He told his interviewers Mohammad Salahuddin and Kamarudin Ja'far that the problem was in trying to get Muslims to practise those values and, there-

by, gain greater respect and acceptance by non-Muslims.

"This we try to do by precept and by example," he said when asked about the rationale for the Government's Islamisation policy and the non-Muslims' response to the policy.

Dr Mahathir felt Muslims in Malaysia and everywhere else would become stronger and not leave their countries to seek refuge in non-Muslim countries if they practised such values.

Referring to the Islamic University, Islamic Insurance and the Islamic Bank, he said they could be set up without

the spread of Islamic values.

This, he added, was evidenced by Islamic institutions in non-Muslim countries which did very well "yet have not influenced the values of the people in those countries."

## Lip-service

"The Islamic value that we want to inculcate above all is the high sense of morality that is taught by Islam. We want to build a community which practises brotherhood among Muslims, tolerance towards non-Muslims who do no harm to Muslims, honesty in all

our dealings, lack of avarice, discipline, cleanliness, honour, harmony, respect for elders and so on.

"There is much lip-service among Muslims where these values are concerned. Thus, Muslims are murdered in the name of brotherhood, promises are made with no intention of keeping them, arrogance displayed even when possessing only little power."

He added that although Malaysia realised some of the Islamic values it wanted to inculcate were also universal values, "that does not make them any less Islamic."

Asked to evaluate the Malaysian version of democracy, Dr Mahathir said "democracy is as much, if not more, a Muslim concept as it is a Western concept."

The Prime Minister felt that the feudalism and absolutism practised in the Muslim world were not Islamic systems.

He said: "If the democracy that we practise in Malaysia is Western, then the usage of English is also Western. Just as the use of English will not make us any less Muslim, the practise of democracy will not make us Western.

"We are a Malaysian democracy and we are as

compatible with Islam as any country that is Muslim can be in this day and age. Islam was never meant to force Muslims to stagnate to their own detriment."

On economic development, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia intended to develop to be on par with the developed countries.

Politically, he added, it intended to be stable. "We will only fight against those people who try to weaken our country by splitting the Muslims."

Dr Mahathir observed that although only 50 per cent of Malaysians were Muslims, Islam was acknowledged by all Malaysians as the official religion.

As such, Islam guided government policy and its propagation was officially sanctioned and supported.

About Malaysia's multi-racial society, he said it had basic strengths derived from the people's realisation that no one stood to gain from the strife seen in other similarly-constituted countries.