

Within Islamic law to give exemptions: PM

NST 11 MAR 1985

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said giving exemptions to non-Muslims in the country is not against the teachings of Islam.

"If we look into the history of Islam, we will find that when there are non-Muslims in a country under Muslim administration, various forms of relaxation are given to them," he said.

"This is regarded as in

accordance with the teachings of Islam and this is what we are doing in our country," the Prime Minister said in an interview published in the second edition of *Mingguan Era*, a weekly magazine.

He also stressed it is not a sin for a Muslim minority to live in a country not ruled according to Islamic law.

On requests for salary increase by Government employees, he said it had to be looked into thoroughly as it involved a vast sum of money.

Almost one million people are under the employment of the Government, making it the biggest employer compared with Japan, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand.

Therefore, he added, the country could never be able to spend more money for salaries without reducing expenditure for other people or sectors.

Realistic

"Rightly we should increase the salary when we earn more. This earning again depends on productivity," he said.

Stressing that national productivity depended on

the productivity of Government staff, he said any salary increase would continue to rely on increased productivity.

On the relationship between employers and workers' unions, he said it depended more on the action taken by the workers' unions.

He said that if a union is militant or has political interest, employers will be afraid to approach it.

But he was happy to note that union leaders in the public sector were not afraid to say what was true and realistic although they might not become popular.

He said the calm situation in the industrial sector in the past three years was an achievement for the country.