

# KEEP AN OPEN MIND, PM TELLS MUSLIMS

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged Muslims today to seek with an open mind the proper interpretation and meaning of verses from the Quran.

"There is a need to analyse the true meaning of the verses. By doing so, we are not questioning the Quran or the teachings of Prophet Muhammad," the Prime Minister said when opening a seminar on Islam at Pusat Islam here.

Dr Mahathir said the study would reflect the open-mindedness of Muslims and that knowing the true meaning of the verses would help ensure the community did not repeat mistakes of the past.

He said the study was all the more important because certain individuals were interpreting the verses and Islam to their advantage and causing confusion in the community, sometimes resulting in bitter arguments.

He said there was a chance the interpretations were inaccurate because they were made by people.

"Even if these people are 99 per cent right, there is still the one per cent chance that they could be inaccurate.

"If the community follows their interpretations, it could end up being lost," he added.

Dr Mahathir said that merely reading the Quran would not allow a Muslim to understand Islam.

He said that to understand the religion, Muslims depended on the interpretations of educated people.

"Our problem now is whether their interpretations are correct or otherwise," he added.

Dr Mahathir said finding the true meaning of the verses would enable Muslims to discover the elements that had made the community successful more than 1,400 years ago.

He also felt that at present, Muslims were giving attention to only certain aspects of the religion and said that it was necessary for the community to examine other Islamic values as well and the religion as a whole.

Dr Mahathir said the community had also grown dependent on non-Muslims in many areas.

"Even the Islamic clothes we wear are most times made with the help of non-Muslims. We have nearly lost the skill to make such items," he added.