

# Need for flexible method, PM tells scholars

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged Muslim scholars to exercise an open and flexible approach in the implementation of Islamic codes and methods to suit the modern world.

He said in proposing management styles and ethics propagated by the religion, they must ensure both Muslims and non-Muslims enjoy a fair and efficient Islamic management.

Opening a seminar on Islamic management for the Asia-Pacific region at the International Islamic University here, the Prime Minister urged the scholars to examine the interpretations of the Quran and *hadith* in the light of the management problems currently faced by Muslim societies.

"If we fail to consider this point, we will fail to ensure that Islam is a religion for all times," he added.

He wanted scholars to introduce new ideas based on the

## ■ DON'T RAISE PETTY ISSUES — ANWAR: P5

eternal principles of Islam in order to shape the destiny of the Muslim community.

According to Dr Mahathir, while some articles of faith in Islam must be accepted without question, the injunctions related to daily affairs were based on reasons which thinking people could readily accept.

He said Islam urged Muslims to strive for perfection but did not condemn those who, having tried, failed.

"But Muslims must try to adhere as perfectly as possible to the Islamic code of ethics in the management of all worldly affairs," he added.

The Prime Minister did not

TURN TO P5, COL 1

## Stress on justice under Islamic system

★ FROM PAGE ONE

want Muslims to be satisfied with saying that Islam is a complete way of life and that it is for all times without making efforts to apply it to current conditions.

"Any attempt to recreate the state of affairs at the time of the Prophet to enable us to practise the teachings of Islam would be an admission that Islam is good for Arabia in the seventh century of Masihi or the first century of the Hijrah only. Such a tacit admission would be contrary to Islam," he said.

He said the challenge of developing a modern management system compatible with Islam and yet capable of competing with westernised systems was daunting because the Muslims emphasised their difference.

Dr Mahathir said an Islamic system of management in the present century must be new and modern, directed towards achieving the goals of Islam and infusing its values and principles in present day life.

"The Quran and sunnah are the primary sources, of course, but there is also a great deal to be learnt from the history of the Muslims who ruled most of the civilised world for centuries with one of the most efficient systems of management and administration known to mankind."

He said the challenge for those trying to Islamise the discipline of management was made more difficult because others insisted on using obsolete laws and regulations.

Past practices could be used as guides but they should not be considered an intrinsic part of Islamic dogma.

Dr Mahathir criticised the rigidity in the attitude of some taqlid-oriented Muslims, who had divorced Islam from human needs and conditions.

He said these scholars had given the legal decisions of the early Muslim jurists the value of eternal law, elevating them to the status of divine authority.

The Prime Minister urged scholars to analyse contemporary reality using the basic and eternal concepts of Islam.

"It must be remembered the early interpreters of the Quran and the sunnah worked within the context of the situation prevailing in their times," he said.

He reminded the Muslims that the glorious era of Islam ended when rigidity set in and Muslims ignored changing conditions when interpreting and formulating the *fiqh* (laws).

Dr Mahathir said Islamic management stressed justice.

He said the Prophet was a manager and a trader but the quality most associated with him was trustworthiness. Therefore, Muslim managers must also be trustworthy.