

Beware of false ulamak, says PM

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PETALING JAYA, Fri. — The Prime Minister today advised the Muslim community to be cautious of people who claim to be *ulamak* (religious scholars) lest they be misguided by deviationist teachings.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said deviationist practices occurred among Muslims because of the ease with which they accepted a person as an *ulamak*.

"While we accept these religious experts to have inherited the Prophet's legacy of knowledge and missionary work and are, therefore, accorded high status, Muslims should not easily accept anyone as an *ulamak* and who claims to be the Imam Mahadi or his companion or to be able to hold a spiritual meeting with the Prophet," he said when opening the fifth conference of *ulamak* at the Kelana Jaya Pilgrims' Complex here.

Dr Mahathir said after more than 30 years of independence, *ulamak* in the country continued to provide active service in the face of challenges that threatened the Islamic faith and Muslim as well as Malay unity.

There were those with a limit-

ed knowledge of Islam who had shaped and used the influence of religion for certain objectives, he added.

"Because the mask of religion protects them from criticisms, they have now become arrogant to the extent that they claim to be more qualified to administer the religious affairs of the country.

"This group interprets Islam according to its wishes, to the point that it deviates from the faith."

Obsessed by their success in influencing a certain group, particularly women, these people not only disturbed students but led them astray and into accepting their every wish.

He said these people were luring more minors into their circle.

Where the leaders were working hard to unite the *ummah*, this group was highlighting issues like dubious spiritual orders, doomsday and the whereabouts of the Imam Mahadi, to confuse society.

He said these matters were not questions that could be determined by anyone.

"History has proven that a wrong understanding of these matters destroyed the faith and unity of society."

The *ulamak* should always make society understand that a strong religious conviction was the basis of true faith.

He said every Muslim must understand elements of Islamic teachings so that he or she would not be easily influenced by deviationist teachings.

Islam could not be taken in splinter forms by giving priority to only elements to suit one's needs, he said.

Islam must be "lived" fully as required by the Quran.

Muslims must live in a spirit of brotherhood and not in cliques or groups.

The Prime Minister reiterated his call to the *ulamak* to form more second echelon groups to deal with situations that affected society from time to time.

Besides giving lectures, it was now time for the *ulamak* to produce genuine and authoritative reference books in the national language which could help prevent Muslims in the country being influenced by the writings of *ulamak* with dubious intentions.

These reference books could either be translations of foreign books or writings of the *ulamak*.

The Prime Minister also

paid tribute to the *ulamak* for their meaningful contributions towards the attainment of independence.

He said during the colonial days religious scholars played an important role in instilling among Muslims a love for the country and a spirit of independence.

Earlier, head of Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah Malaysia (Yadim) Datuk Seri Kamaruddin Mat Isa spoke of the importance of Muslims practising the Islamic value system.

He said any failure to do so would create disunity among the *ummah*.

Islam encouraged Muslims to live as a family to ensure peace and harmony.

If this was not practised, Muslims would live in an atmosphere of disharmony, suspicion and enmity.

Datuk Seri Kamaruddin also said Muslims must not think ill of their brothers, as doing so could lead to feelings of disrespect.

Also present at the opening of the three-day conference were Education Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Yusof Nor and foreign Muslim diplomats.