

'Muslims here should be grateful'

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JITRA, Tues. — The Prime Minister said Muslims in the country should be grateful that they are able to practice their religion unhindered by unrest, ethnic strife, famine and oppression.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said they had a lot to thank God for during this fasting month when comparing their existence to that of other Muslims in other countries.

"In some countries, if you take a bus, the bus will explode. If you board a train, it will derail and when you enter a building, it will explode," he said after breaking fast at the Tanjung Puah mosque.

He said in the Soviet Republic, Muslims like Azerbaijanis and Turks were being oppressed and had their religious freedom stifled.

"After 70 years of communist rule, youths in these republics only regard Islam as a historical matter. They accept Prophet Mohammad as a benign person but for them what he preached then are not applicable now."

In stark contrast, the authorities in Malaysia have been tireless in their efforts to uphold the dignity of the religion, he added.

He said Malaysians should value the much better living condition in the country. "We do not live in fear. We can go to the mosques for prayers, nobody will stop us."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said Muslims should be more grateful if they compared life here with those in the other countries.

According to him, peace and harmony depended largely on the Muslims. "If we are weak and cannot control the situation, others will exert pressure on us."

The Prime Minister's wife, Patin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Haji Osman Aroff, State Exco members and their wives were among those present.

The Prime Minister and his wife returned to Kuala Lumpur last night.