

Dr M: Carry out studies on Islamic interpretations

By Ahmad A. Talib

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called for more research to be undertaken on the various interpretations of Islam, which can confuse and weaken Muslims.

He said this could help correct any misleading interpretation of the religion.

"Valuable lessons can also be obtained from a deep understanding of Islamic history."

At the launching of the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia here today, Dr Mahathir said: "Researchers at the institute must have an open mind and be brave to question views which are considered orthodox."

"What must be maintained at all times is the truth in Islam as taught by the Prophet. Teachings

based on interpretations and created by those who came after the Prophet cannot be considered to be of the same level as those of the Prophet.

"They can be fully analysed and dropped if found to contradict the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet."

He said efforts to revive the golden age of Islam itself should be considered a noble responsibility. Its rewards were in the successful implementation of this desire, he said.

If, in the process of implementation, one received something in return, then it was coincidental and not the actual target, he said.

In fact, he said, if the Muslim states were successful, all other countries would enjoy the benefits.

To achieve this, there must be a lot of studies on Islam, its history and civili-

sation as well as the bases for past achievements, Dr Mahathir said.

"The studies must be done sincerely and not be influenced by sentiments or bias that are found among Muslims today. When the studies are completed, facts must be received and the fiction rejected.

"There is nothing to be gained by claiming that even though Muslims today appear weak and unsuccessful, they are actually strong and successful. There is also nothing to be gained by claiming that even though others may appear strong and successful, they are in fact weak and backward.

"Only through sincere studies, to be followed by actions based on research and guided by facts, could we do something to revive the golden age of Islam.

"Every Muslim must be interested in trying to re-

vive the golden age of Islam. The problem is how we are going to get this done.

"It is almost certain that if we continue with the present practice, and if we do not take concrete steps towards it, the success will not come to us automatically.

"Instead, there's a good chance Muslims will be left further behind.

"The first step is to determine our targets and define what is meant by success and prosperity.

"Even though there are many countries categorised as developed, we know that their intellectual and physical success are accompanied by a great deal of moral decadence.

"Surely, this is not a good example of the success and prosperity that we seek."