

Industry and religion are linked, says PM

KUALA LUMPUR: The negative views held by some Muslim countries towards industry are not only unprofitable but also contrary to the teachings of Islam, the Prime Minister said yesterday.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said such an attitude was one reason Muslim countries were unable to act effectively in Bosnia.

"Today, we see with sadness the killings, torture and rape of women in Bosnia," he said.

"But there is nothing the one billion Muslims can do because there is no

Muslim country which has the military capability and strength," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the opening of the Conference on Islam and Industrialisation organised by the Malaysian Institute for Islamic Understanding (Iktim).

He said the situation had come about because Muslims felt industrial progress had nothing to do with Islam.

But Islam, he said, made it obligatory for Muslims to be able to defend themselves.

And to do so, Muslims

needed modern technology in their land, air, sea and space defence systems.

"Whatever the stance of Muslims towards industry, we ought to remember that industries controlled by non-Muslims can destroy Muslims, as evidenced by what is happening in Bosnia and West Asia," said Dr Mahathir.

"Muslims should see industry as a tool which can strengthen its people and make them more respected and able to defend themselves."

Dr Mahathir took to task those who believed that they could be good Muslims without industry and that industry estranged man from religion.

Industry, he said, made it possible for the Quran to be printed and widely distributed instead of being confined to a limited number of copies.

He said the clothing industry was important for producing garments for prayers and dressing according to religious requirements, while aeroplanes made it possible

for Muslims to perform the haj.

The construction industry built mosques where Muslims carried out their obligatory Friday prayers.

Dr Mahathir called on Muslims to mould a truly Islamic attitude towards industry.

"Muslims would move to industrialise if they realised the link between industry and the religion.

"If they see industrialisation as a service to society, they would also give emphasis to quality and value," he added.