

PM: Islamic countries should strengthen themselves

Countering Western perception of justice

Correct wrong image of religion, says PM

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who, when in power, become arrogant and do not abide by the teachings of the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad and the examples of the rule of the Prophet and well-known caliphs in Islamic history," he said.

"It is the responsibility of all Muslims to correct the wrong image of Islam caused by extremists and deviationist groups who have given a negative image of the religion and its followers."

Dr Mahathir said the the world's present chaos was a result of the international community's disregard for the principles of justice.

"The international community cares not and is cruel to those who are weak," he said, citing as an example the Bosnian experience where the weak Bosnian

Muslims were not allowed to obtain arms even for self-defence.

"The Serbs who are already strong are allowed to increase their weaponry. Now, the big powers have agreed to give the territories forcibly taken by the Serbs to them without due regard to the rights of the Bosnian Muslims," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that to the big powers, the powerful Serbs were right and the weak Muslims were wrong and had no right.

Also present at the opening were Deputy Health Minister Datuk Farid Ariffin, IKIM chairman Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid who is the Chief Secretary to the Government, IKIM director-general Datuk Dr Ismail Ibrahim, senior civil servants, academicians and key figures in the private sector.

By Nuraina Samad

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Islamic countries should strengthen themselves in the face of a world perception that might is right, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the actual principle subscribed to by the West and the majority of present day world civilisation was based on this perception.

He said: "Since the West is powerful, everything they do is fair. Since the Serbs are strong, their annexation of Muslim land is condoned. As Islamic countries and Muslims everywhere are weak, everything they do is wrong and unfair."

"Efforts by Muslims to reassert the concept of justice, as espoused by Islam, were criticised by the West as an attempt to revive old and antiquated thinking."

"The danger is that Muslims, in their frustration over their weaknesses and failures, will react contrary to their religious teachings. Because of the disappointment, Muslims may act

rashly and commit the same offences as their foes.

"This would then confirm the allegations of the West that Muslims are extremists," he said when opening the two-day conference on "Islam and Justice" organised by the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM) at Bank Negara here.

He added that if today certain countries and races such as the Serbs and the

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Jews dared to and were able to suppress and terrorise, it was because Islamic countries were weak.

The Prime Minister said to be strong therefore, it was important to ensure that a fair and efficient administration be established so that the achievements of Islamic countries were on par with those of other developed countries.

"Only after we have developed can we undertake preparations to strengthen

our defensive capability to be on the same level as other developed nations in all fields," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that before Muslims blamed others, they should question themselves on their Islamic practices, especially in respect of ensuring a fair administration.

"If Islamic justice is not evident and is difficult to be accepted by all, then we are partly to be blamed."

Dr Mahathir said in Malaysia, the Government which is led by Muslims had to show to all quarters — Muslims and non-Muslims — that its administration based on the concept of principles of Islamic justice was truly fair.

The Prime Minister cited several examples in history of Islamic justice where Islamic rule was fair and just to non-Muslims.

"If there is perception today that Islam is extremist or cruel, the reason is not that Islam is cruel but because there are Muslims

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