

PM tells varsity to teach all subjects

By WONG CHUN WAI and ROHAIZAD A. RAHIM

PETALING JAYA: An Islamic university must not confine itself solely to the teachings and interpretations of Islamic theology, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said all the subjects that were being taught in other universities must be taught with equal thoroughness in an Islamic university.

"The students who graduate from the Islamic university must be well-rounded and knowledgeable and must be able to live and contribute to the way of life of Muslims in all aspects," he said.

"There had always been within the Muslim coun-

^Ptry a belief that an Islamic university must be concerned exclusively with the study of Islam," he said at the International Islamic University here yesterday in conjunction with its 10th anniversary.

He said Islam was a religion that positively exhort the community "to study what surrounds us and constitutes a part of our life."

He said not everyone in a Muslim community must have a thorough knowledge of Islam, adding that it was sufficient if there was even one or a few who had thorough knowledge of the different aspects and parts of the religion.

"For the rest, they must have sufficient knowledge of the creed so as not to deviate from the es-

sence of Islam," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the different disciplines that an Islamic university must focus on, teach, research and spread were a part of the teachings of religion.

"They are not secular. Knowledge regarding what is not concerned with religious rituals and laws must still be governed by the needs of Islam as a religion and a way of life," he said.

Dr Mahathir said failure to learn and master subjects which were not specifically religious would expose the Muslims to the dangers of losing their religion.

He also said the collapse of religion in the West should serve as a warning to Muslims.

"If we are too liberal in

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our interpretation of Islam, it, too, can collapse. But fear of this possibility should not lead us to curtail or reverse even what Islam permits," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was aware that his views might not be shared by many "but as a Muslim I feel it is my duty to say all these even if I will come under much criticism especially by the orthodox."

He said there were some who would claim that there was now a great resurgence of Islam at the moment.

"But in truth at no time in history has Islam been as greatly humiliated as now, at no time have the Muslims wavered more in their faith," Dr Mahathir said.