

# Dr Mahathir: Strive for

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KUALA TERENGGANU, Thurs. — Muslims must strive to succeed in this world as much as they do for the world hereafter if they want others to respect them and the religion, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"Muslims had become weak because they had separated knowledge on science and other fields from religion," he said when opening the Islamic Civilisation Exposition here.

He said because of the weakness, the Muslims could not act effectively to help their fellow Muslims who were starving, or being tortured, killed and oppressed by others.

He said Malaysia was concerned about the difficulties faced by fellow Muslims in other countries and had extended its assistance as best as it could.

The Muslim world would have been able to help their fellow Muslims effectively if

they had power, he said.

"Some may say that it is not important to make others respect Islam as long as the Muslims carry out their religious obligations.

"But we must remember that if we do not respect Muslims who had arrived in Malaysia prior to the introduction of Islam in this part of the world, we would not have accepted Islam.

"It would be impossible for the Malays to accept Islam then if those who came

here had no wisdom and were poor. But the Malays had accepted Islam because Muslims who came were merchants and they were wise."

He said history had also proven that with the advent of Islam, the Arabs, who were once ignorant and used to uncivilised practices, had become progressive and able to propagate the religion successfully.

He said because of improved knowledge and civi-

## success to gain respect

lisation among Muslims, Islam grew as a religion. Today, there are over one billion Muslims in the world or one to every five people.

He said the Christian administration had separated the role of churches from the state in the middle ages. During the period, he said, priests were among the most educated.

Because of this, they had strong influence over the people, so much so that the administration of poor

countries was controlled by them.

This, he said, had caused dissatisfaction among the Christian administrators themselves and they then decided to separate the church from the state.

Also present at the opening ceremony were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, Public Enterprises Minister Datuk Dr Yusof Noor and Deputy Minister

in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Dr Hamid Othman.

The exposition, open to the public at the Stadium Negeri here until Sept 22, is organised by the Islamic Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department, the State Government and Kolej Agama Sultan Zainal Abidin.

It is held in conjunction with the college's 10th anniversary. Terengganu is the last leg for the expo.