

# Bickering weakens Muslims

NSI 1 JAN 1994

ALOR STAR, Thurs. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Muslim nations were weak and unable to defend themselves because they spent too much time bickering among themselves instead of acquiring knowledge to strengthen Islam and their countries.

He said this was evident from the fact that none of the Muslim countries could offer help to protect the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina from the brutality of the Serbs.

"Not even one Muslim nation could help the Bosnians and not even one could influence the world body (the United Nations) to help them. We must ask ourselves why we are weak," he said.

Although there was a very large world Muslim population, he said most of the Muslims were staying in weak and poor countries that could not even afford to defend themselves.

"When we are suppressed by others, we are not capable of defending our own country. They (Muslims) are being tortured, killed and raped but we are not able to help them.

"More Muslims died in the hands of Muslim brothers than in the hands of the enemies of Islam."

This was because Muslims were not abiding by the true teachings of Islam, he added.

"We allow ourselves to be occupied with trivial matters and bicker among ourselves," Dr Mahathir said when opening the RM750,000 Darul Aitam Walmasakin Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, the Perkim building, and the Musalla Usmani Hall at Jalan Langgar.

Also present were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff

and Sarawak Chief Minister and Perkim chairman Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud.

Dr Mahathir also said Muslims should be more committed to strengthening themselves.

He said they should emulate the Prophet's period when the Muslims concentrated on strengthening and preparing themselves for war by equipping themselves with swords and horses.

"Muslims today must be rich in knowledge and wealth to enable us to invent and produce sophisticated warplanes, jetfighters and battle tanks.

"We need knowledge if we want to be prepared for a war ... it is not to invade people but for self-defence."

Dr Mahathir said some Muslims confined themselves to questioning and evaluating the faith of other Muslims to the extent that some even formed political parties merely for their own interests, instead of the religious interest.

"That's why we cannot really concentrate on strengthening Islam."

Dr Mahathir said the people should be grateful that Malaysians were living in harmony despite the multi-racial population.

"Our population comprises 45 per cent non-Muslims. Despite that we are living harmoniously."

He added Muslims should learn from the history of Egypt and Spain.

He said for 800 years Spain was ruled by a Muslim Government but finally it fell into the hands of the non-Muslims.

"It was not because the non-Muslims were strong but it was because the Muslims were weak and lazy to acquire knowledge.

"They oppressed the non-Muslims and finally the Muslims were chased out of

Spain by the non-Muslims. Today we see no Muslims in Spain," he added.

In Egypt, Dr Mahathir said a group of extremists was trying to weaken the Government by crippling the tourism industry.

"They killed tourists and as a result, Egypt has become a poor country."

Dr Mahathir said Muslims should avoid repeating the same mistakes and they should be more tolerant to the non-Muslims.

"We want our religion to continue to be respected and, therefore, we must show the true picture of Islam.

"We should not discrimi-

nate against the non-Muslims and we should help them to understand Islam," he added.

Later, Dr Mahathir, who is also Perkim patron, received donations from firms for Perkim.

Among the donors were Sikap Project Management Services Sdn Bhd which do-

nated two Nissan Vennetevans worth RM90,000, Tan Sri Azman Hashim of Arab-Malaysian Merchant Bank Berhad (RM100,000), Encik Izhar Sulaiman (RM100,000), Datuk Ting Pek Khiing and Sarawak Mosque Board (RM250,000) and Yayasan Islam Negeri Kedah (RM50,000).