

# Appreciate all religions, says PM

PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad reminded Malaysians last night to appreciate the different practices of every religion and not to ridicule them.

"We must learn to appreciate the ways of other religions. In the Quran, it is stated very clearly that we should not ridicule the way others pray or others will ridicule the way we pray," he said.

This was part of the teachings that some Muslims forgot, he said.

Speaking at the 10th anniversary dinner of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism, Dr Mahathir said Malaysians must be grateful that there was no violence between followers of the various religions.

"Sometimes there is violence between races but we can contain it," he said.

"We at times have to make rules and conditions that appear to restrict certain religious activities," he said, adding that he hoped the people would understand the

constraints under which the Government had to work.

"Of course there is dissatisfaction among us but it can be resolved if we discuss it at the table rather than taking it to the streets," he said.

He described the 10-year existence of the council as a big success as not many countries could have such an association that could work to-

gether for so long.

Council president Bishop Dr Denis C. Dutton said attempts by any religious community to build the infrastructure needed to practise its own religion should not be viewed as suspicious or bad.

He said facilities such as places of worship, burial grounds and entry permits for resource personnel were necessary for religious practice.

Religion, he said, could not be fostered by compulsion nor propagated by fraudulent means.

He also said a council-organised seminar concluded that a pupil's own religion should be taught in schools. A memorandum would be submitted to the Education Ministry on the matter.

A memorandum on relevant religious matters was also submitted to Dr Mahathir.