

# PM: Every Muslim must ensure our peace endures

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JITRA, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight that it was the responsibility of every Muslim to safeguard and maintain the peace of the country.

He said the Muslims could have differing political views but they must share the same sentiment in ensuring that peace continued to prevail.

"Even among friends we share different views. One prefers tea and another tea with milk.

"We don't argue over a drink, do we? In politics, we are divided by two political parties.

"Even if we have 10 parties with different political views, in Islam we are united... We shouldn't fight one another," Dr Mahathir said after breaking fast with about 2,000 people, including non-Muslims, at Masjid Jamek in Kodiang, about

20km from here.

Joining the Prime Minister and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff and Perlis Menteri Besar Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh and their wives.

After breaking the fast, Dr Mahathir and the State leaders performed *maghrib* prayers at the mosque.

The Prime Minister reiterated his call to the people to be grateful for the country's stability.

He highlighted the sufferings of Muslims in other countries including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, Rwanda and Chechnya and compared the situation there to Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said it was seldom that a plural society like that of Malaysia could enjoy such peace.

"The Muslims have never considered the non-Muslims as their foes and vice versa," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the country's prosperity could be seen from the number of Muslims performing the *haj* in Mecca.

"This year, 42,000 people applied to go to Mecca but the Saudi Government could accommodate 19,000 or one per cent of our population, he said.

"This shows we are well off unlike other countries where they cannot even afford to leave their village because of poverty and fear for their safety," he added.

Dr Mahathir said there were times when the Muslims took the peace here for granted.

He criticised certain people who regarded worldly knowledge as useless.

"If the knowledge is useless, why do we need to buy weapons to protect ourselves?" he asked.

"We can manufacture aircraft, we don't have to rely on others. We have to learn such knowledge in order to be self-reliant," he added.

Dr Mahathir also highlighted the recognition of Malaysia by other Muslim countries.

"We have been the model for some of the Arab countries. We will continue to help others, especially the Muslims," he added.