

23 MAR 1997

Mahathir-Islam

MAHATHIR REMINDS MUSLIMS NOT TO BE FANATICAL

By: Amin Husaini Harun

RIYADH, March 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Muslims in Malaysia need not adopt a fanatical or extremist attitude in championing the teachings of Islam.

Fanatical and extremist attitude to the extent of not accepting the truth would only prove to be a loss to Muslims, he told Malaysian journalists before leaving for Kuala Lumpur after a three-day visit to Saudi Arabia.

Dr Mahathir earlier received the King Faisal International Award for his contributions to Islam at a ceremony here. He also held talks with businessmen in Jeddah.

The Prime Minister said the government strove to create a balance in the teaching of Islam by introducing Islamic History and also the history before the coming of Islam in the Islamic subject in schools.

These historic factors were very important in preventing Muslims from adopting a fanatical attitude, he said.

On the award, Dr Mahathir said to some extent it represented international recognition of Malaysia's efforts in the cause of Islam.

"They gave this recognition because in Malaysia we have succeeded in bringing about development at the same time holding to religion. We have a balance between material and spiritual wellbeing," he said.

On his talks with businessmen in Jeddah, the Prime Minister said Malaysian and Saudi Arabian private sectors could have joint ventures in the construction field. -- BERNAMA

AH AAM