

Beware of fanatics, Dr Mahathir tells Muslim nations

By ZULKIFLI ABD RAHMAN

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned Muslim nations yesterday against fanatics who, in the name of Islam, were trying to keep Muslims as a backward and vulnerable people.

The Prime Minister said

Muslim nations were duty-bound to the religion to keep up with the more developed non-Muslim countries in the wake of globalisation.

"While the dangers of globalisation must be viewed seriously, Muslim countries must make use of both information technology and indus-

trial capacity to catch up with developed countries.

"There are many Muslim countries which would not do anything to save themselves from the globalisation process but, by violently opposing it, would actively try to prevent other Muslims from taking any pre-emptive action.

"Since they think we should leave our fate in the hands of Allah, it is strange that they should actually be taking positive steps to prevent Muslims from saving themselves," Dr Mahathir said in his keynote speech on *The Issue and Challenges on the Islamic World* at an international seminar on

"The Impact of Globalisation on the Islamic World: Issues and Challenges for the 21st Century," here.

The three-day seminar, jointly organised by the Foreign Ministry and the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, was attended by more than 140 participants from the

56-member Organisation of Islamic Conference.

Dr Mahathir said while there were Muslim countries taking measures to keep up with the rest of the world, there were also "fanatics" who would do their best — or worse — to keep Muslims backward and vulnerable.

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