

Afghan style not our way, says PM

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'Country is run in manner Islam demands'

By R. Manirajan

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri: The government will continue to defend the concept of Islam in the way the country is run despite criticisms by certain parties, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the government runs the country the way Islam wants it and "our conscience is clear".

However, there are certain people who feel the government is not Islamic enough and want the country to be administered like Afghanistan.

"They want us to be like Afghanistan and if we do not do it, we are not Islamic enough and they reject Malaysia as an Islamic nation.

"They feel that the gov-

ernment should be overthrown as the country is not managed like Afghanistan," he told a press conference after launching the new Islamic Research Centre and Digital Al-Quran (Al Murshid) in Compaq iPAQ pocket personal computer at the Islamic Art Museum.

Asked if efforts are being taken to explain the misinterpretation of Islam, Mahathir said that at pondok-type religious schools and madrasahs, children are taught that it is their duty to Islamise the country as the government and country are not Islamic.

The children grow up to particularly hate the government and end up wanting to fight against the government, he added.

This problem is faced by all Islamic countries, and they can never be sta-

ble or grow fast, as this kind of people always want to destabilise the country.

He said: "These countries cannot progress because they are pre-occupied with fighting among themselves."

In his speech, Mahathir said the government will not implement Islamic laws that will do gross injustice to the people.

Citing a hypothetical situation, he said if a girl was raped and she lodges a report, she will be asked to produce four substantial witnesses and if she fails, the rapist goes free.

He added: "If there were four witness, will they just sit there and watch her being raped? When the rapist is freed, the girl may conceive and the people will blame her for having a child out of wedlock and adultery."

"The punishment is stoning to death but her rapist is free. This is due to no substance in the law."

Mahathir said the world is not what it was 1,400 years ago.

"Maybe, Muslims at that time may come forward but Muslims today can't do that because most of them are sinners."

On the war in Afghanistan, Mahathir said countries like Malaysia can only speak out against US air strikes and that is about all it can do.

In many cases, Malaysia's voice will be drowned by the voices of others who get more publicity, especially in the Western media, he said.

He said the United Nations should direct the war in Afghanistan if it is to become an international effort to fight terrorism.