

Mahathir wants ulama to help government check disunity in community

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri: Ulama should work hand-in-hand with the government so as to curb disunity among Muslims which, if not checked, can lead to their downfall.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said ulama also should help protect the country's sovereignty, or else certain quarters can take advantage and manipulate the religion for their personal interests.

Opening the 5th national ulama conference today, Mahathir said ulama in the country should have the awareness that the big powers are always trying, in many ways, to colonise the

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country again.

"Therefore, ulama should play the important role of encouraging the Muslims in the country to acquire skills in all aspects, particularly defence, and information and communication technology," he said.

Mahathir said Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo are abused because the big powers know there is no country that is as powerful as them.

"If there is one Muslim country that is powerful and

has very strong defence power, the non-Muslims would not dare abuse Muslims in any part of the world," he said.

Mahathir also advised Muslims to learn from history, when the Islamic empire was very powerful and widespread.

"However, all the power and strength were lost when the Muslims began to disunite, resulting in the birth of several sects.

"This has caused the downfall of the Islamic empire," he added.

Mahathir hopes the conference can help to discuss all the problems and issues which threaten the Muslim

community today, and also develop strategies to overcome these problems.

The three-day conference is organised by the Malaysian Islamic Foundation.

It aims at discussing and seeking solutions to the current issues faced by the Muslim community.

The conference is participated by both locals and foreigners.

Among the foreign participants are Muslim College London Dean Prof Dr M. A. Zaki Badawi, Jordan syariah laws expert Dr Abdul Aziz Al-Khayyad, and Syrian Islamic scholar Dr Mahmud Kiftaro.