

Be open-minded, Mahathir tells Muslims

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues: Muslims should be open-minded and equip themselves with the ability to evaluate and choose between good and bad, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said an open mind must be guided by the truth and be able to adapt to changes in order to achieve happiness and success.

"An open mind must firstly identify and admit the weaknesses of Muslim Malays and secondly identify what changes and practises will benefit from an open mind," he said in his keynote address at the opening of a three-day conference on the *Issues and Mind-opening Process of the Muslim Malays* organised by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP).

"The method and ability to evaluate between good and bad is a skill which the Muslim Malays should have. There is no shame in admitting our weaknesses and arrogance.

"After identifying weaknesses, we should not be ashamed to accept and practise values that other people have even though they may be from a group which we dislike."

Present were Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad, the prime minister's religious adviser Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, DBP chairman Datuk Abdul Rahim Abu Bakar, and DBP director-general Datuk A. Aziz Deraman.

Mahathir said the topic of the conference was chosen as such since it is believed that the mind of the Malay Muslims is not open or less open.

"The opening of their minds will benefit them and make them better and more successful," he said.

An open mind should appreciate science and technology, enrich the Muslim community, create and produce sophisticated weapons, form a strong military force and have adequate supplies to protect Muslims who are striving for the cause of Allah.

He reminded Malay Muslims of the current reality that they are weak and depend on others to develop the country and make plans for them.

"In terms of international relations, the truth is that they could not build a country capable of helping those oppressed and the weak," he said.