

PM: Malays not doing enough

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KUALA LUMPUR: The achievements of the Malays have not been significant and they depend too much on other communities to build the nation, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said Malays should open their minds to more knowledge and take stock of their weaknesses.

"Once we know our weaknesses, we must be willing to take the necessary steps to

overcome the problem ... even if it means having to adopt superior practices of other communities ... even if we do not share the same (religious) beliefs as them," he said in his keynote address at the Conference on Issues and Process of Mind Opening of the Malay Muslims at the Crown Princess Hotel here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said it was obvious that their achievements in nation-building had been insignificant and that they had been too dependent

on other races to help develop the country to what it had become today.

On the international level, he said the Malays could not even offer assistance to Muslims in other countries who were oppressed and persecuted by others.

Dr Mahathir said a major weakness identified with "the Malay psyche" was the tendency to take the easy way out in their everyday lives.

"When promised a higher tax collection by the Chinese merchants, the Malay rulers

allowed the Chinese merchants to monopolise the sale of opium.

"Then they gave away their administrative powers to the British after being promised luxuries like pension payments," he added.

The same attitude, he said, still prevailed among the Malays to the extent that they were willing to sell off business opportunities provided by the Government for quick profits.

He said many might disagree that most Malays were

close-minded but the truth was that there were many Malays who still regarded studies in other disciplines, apart from the religion, as secular and dangerous to the Muslim faith.

This belief, the Prime Minister said, still existed because they were promoted by certain *ulamas* who feared that the Muslims' staunch belief in the religion would be eroded by science or that if the Malays were able to question and think logically, their influence in the community would

be diminished.

For example, he said, Islam was fundamentally very simple but there were people who were bent on imposing all sorts of conditions in accepting a person, who was already a Muslim, as a Muslim.

"If only the Malays can be open-minded enough to accept that Islam is progressive and takes into account the constantly changing situation, they will never be backward.

"An open mind can adapt Islam to suit the times," he added.