

# Muslims paying the price now, says Dr M

STAR 22 APR 2002

MANAMA (Bahrain): Muslims in many parts of the world are not able to defend themselves today because they had rejected knowledge outside the religion for fear of being labelled *kafir* or infidels, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said unlike the early Muslims who used knowledge observed from Allah's creations to contribute towards the well-being of humans, a period of fear of knowledge descended on the Muslim world after the European Renaissance.

The Prime Minister said the injunction of Allah to seek knowledge was then interpreted as seeking religious knowledge only.

Knowledge not related to religious law, in particular to the creed and practice of Islam, was not only discouraged but prohibited.

The knowledge obtained from the old non-Muslim civilisation was proscribed and regarded as *haram*, he said in his keynote address titled *The Power of Knowledge in the New Era* at the 31st International Conference of Training and Development Organisations Ltd here yesterday.

More than 1,000 people, including international Muslim intellectuals, attended the conference.

Dr Mahathir said Muslim

intellectuals avoided knowledge outside the religion to the extent that the great Muslim mathematicians, scientists, geographers and navigators were no longer revered but ignored, he added.

Citing Bosnia-Herzegovina, Russia and countries in South Asia and Africa, he said Muslims were paying the price now as they were unable to protect themselves.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims were constantly begging the world to stop the carnage in Palestine as they knew they were weak and unable to defend the *ummah* and Islam even.

He said there was not a single Muslim nation among the developed countries, adding that they were all developing nations dependent on the charity of non-Muslims.

"Certainly if we as Muslims curb the quest for knowledge, we will be the losers because others will carry on the quest anyway and they may apply their knowledge against us," he said.

The Prime Minister later witnessed the signing of several agreements between Malaysian and local companies and opened the Petronas Bahrain office.