

PM: Focus on simple, basic tenets of Islam

STAR 21 NOV 2002

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said Muslims should concentrate on the simple and basic tenets of Islam so that there would not be disagreements between them.

He said some Muslims seemed to give importance to areas where the interpretation were not so clear, and did not want to concentrate on the clear and simple tenets of the religion.

"If we hold on to the simple tenets of Islam, there will be no division among us and we will be able to be strong," he said in his speech after a *berbuka puasa* function at the Putra World Trade Centre yesterday.

He said Muslims should not waste time indulging in polemics and arguing over verses which were unclear. He said such activities would only cause disagreement among Muslims and eventually cause them to be divided.

The requirements of Islam, he

added, were very simple and clear, such as requiring Muslims to gain knowledge by reading, or stating that all Muslims were kin.

"These requirements are so obvious that no one can dispute it. It is such requirements which will not cause Muslims to be

divided," he said.

He said many religious leaders have added their own requirements to the practice of Islam.

"For example, the *terawih* prayers were one continuous prayer for as long as I have been performing them. Now, there are those who say that there should be a sermon in between. Such requirements are all man-made," he said.

Dr Mahathir said those who were regarded as enemies in politics did not become so due to them being non-Muslims or less Muslims but was because of a difference in opinion.

He also said Malaysians should be grateful that they could carry out their fasting obligations in peace, unlike the Muslims in many other countries who faced upheavals and war.

The function was hosted by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for all elected Members of Parliament and state assemblymen.