

PM: Acquire both spiritual and academic knowledge

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Muslim community should concentrate on acquiring both spiritual and academic knowledge so that they can use them to work for the development of the country, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said the Government wanted the people to send their children to national schools instead of religious ones so that students of different races would learn to live harmoniously.

Dr Mahathir said the Government decided to stop providing financial allocation to certain religious schools because such schools were not teaching their students Islamic-related subjects, but

instead taught them to hate the Government.

"Please understand that the Government has and will always be committed to the development of Islamic teachings for our children, but not to the extent of allowing our youth to learn only one subject.

"There are about 4,000 people who apply to become Islamic teachers, but many are rejected because they are specialised only in one subject.

"These jobless teachers then form their own Islamic schools, which lack the proper facilities, and in the end the children will not be able to receive proper education," Dr

Mahathir said at the presentation of donations for school-children at the Tabung Haji headquarters here last night.

The function was organised by the Federal Territory Islamic Orphans Welfare Association.

Dr Mahathir said students in national schools could still learn religious subjects.

He added that the Government was willing to send them to universities to further their religious studies.

"At the same time, they will mix around with people of other races and improve racial harmony in the country.

"Only then, can we live harmoniously with each other," he added.