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Dr M: Knowledge will make Muslims strong

NILAI: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said one of the reasons the Muslim community was weak was its failure to fulfil its religious obligation to seek knowledge, especially in science and technology.

He said Muslims were required to have basic knowledge of Islam, but not all had to study it too deeply as they were also required to master other disciplines.

"Mastering science, physics and mathematics for their own protection and defence does not mean Muslims forget about the hereafter," he said at the Premier Lecture session, in conjunction with Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia's (USIM) 10th anniversary celebration, here.

About 5,000 people, including USIM students, listened to Dr Mahathir's lecture at the Nilai Indoor Stadium.

"If 1.6 billion Muslims are knowledgeable in Islam to the level of ulama, there will be a greater divide as everyone will have different interpretations of religious teachings, like what is happening between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

"But, if there are groups who could master technology and the science of defence, this would suffice to save Muslim communities like in Bosnia (Herzegovina).

"At one time, the Russians defeated the Muslims in Central Asia and Islam was stifled, but the Muslims could not do anything. This was the result of their own weakness due to their lack of knowledge, including that on defence."

Dr Mahathir said Muslims in Malaysia, too, needed to master science and technology so



Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad says it's a religious obligation to seek knowledge

that they could come up with their own inventions without copying the work of others.

"In many places in the world, like Afghanistan and Iraq, Muslims are being oppressed. Muslims are ridiculed. I have been ridiculed and told to take off my shoes for fear there were bombs in them.

"Others are also checked, but they are not treated like what Muslims have to endure as they are often thought to be terrorists.

"When Prophet Muhammad was called a terrorist, we (Muslims) became angry and demonstrated, but this made no impact on the enemies of Islam as the Muslim ummah (community) today is weak." — Bernama