

# Dr M urges Muslims to be trustworthy and work hard

**PHNOM PENH:** Muslims need to strengthen their socio-economic position and stop being dependent on others.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this was the only way Muslims could be well regarded and respected by members of other religions.

"Everywhere we go, we see poor Muslims hopeful for a helping hand from others. Muslims need to follow the ways of Islam... to be trustworthy and work hard.

"This is taught in our religion. If we stick to all these elements, we can succeed. This is what we need to change and get back to what the religion demands (from us)."

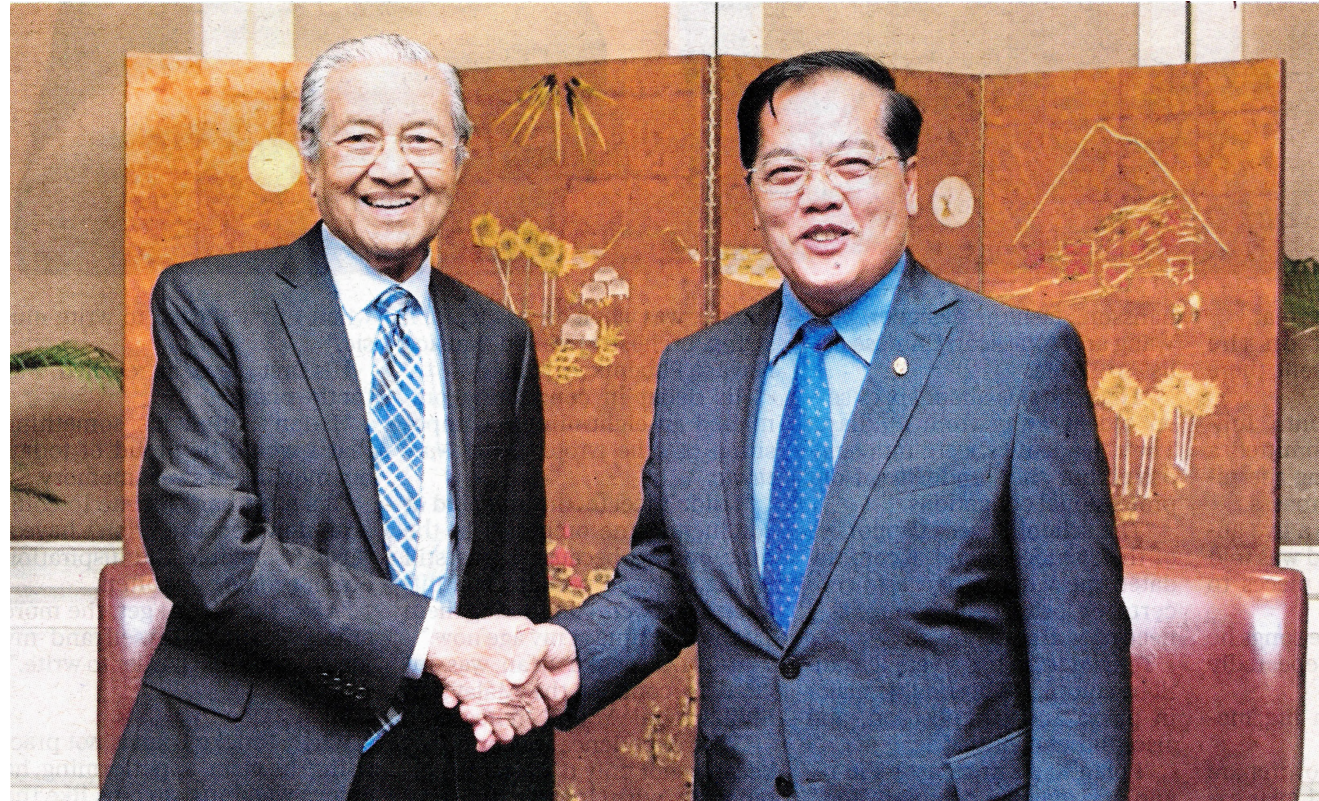
Dr Mahathir said this in a meeting with Cambodian Muslims here yesterday.

Present was Cambodia's Special Task Minister Datuk Dr Othman Hassan, who is responsible for Muslims in the country.

Dr Mahathir was awarded the Islamic Leadership Award by Cambodian Muslims in recognition of Malaysia's role in helping them.

He said it was distressing to see what some Muslims were subjected to, including poverty and oppression, as well as being associated with negative elements.

"There are some among us who do not want to make an effort, or work and hope for handouts. This is the main problem facing Muslims. In fact, there are business opportunities, (which) we do not want to take advantage of. This is an opportunity to empower our



*Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad greeting Cambodia's Special Task Minister Datuk Dr Othman Hassan in Phnom Penh yesterday. BERNAMA PIC*

socio-economic position," he said.

He said business provided opportunities for Muslims to improve their standard of living, and it was even encouraged in Islam.

"When we do business and have a job, we don't have to rely on others. However, what happens is the opposite... We have the wisdom and the skills, but we do not benefit from them.

"That's why we need to return

to the main teachings of Islam," he said.

He arrived here yesterday for a three-day official visit to Cambodia, accompanied by his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

The visit after 25 years was at the invitation of his Cambodian counterpart, Hun Sen.

Today, Dr Mahathir is expected to attend a wreath-laying ceremony at Independence Monument before attending an official welcoming ceremony at the

Peace Palace.

He will hold bilateral talks with Hun Sen. Both are expected to discuss trade and investment, co-operation in agriculture, defence and halal industry development. They will witness the signing of the long-awaited Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and memorandum of understanding on tourism cooperation.

Dr Mahathir will pay a courtesy call on Cambodian acting head of state and president Samdech Vi-

bol Sena Pheakdey Say Chhum and attend a dialogue with Malaysian businessmen and investors, involving 28 Malaysian companies in Cambodia.

Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah will attend an official dinner hosted by Hun Sen.

Dr Siti Hasmah has a separate programme, which includes a visit to the Cambodian Red Cross and lunch with the Women's Association of the Malaysian embassy in Cambodia.