

Govt will act against extremists: Dr M

IPOH, Mon. — The Government will not hesitate to take firm action against extremists who exploit racial issues, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned today.

Dr Mahathir said that initially such issues might not seem racial in nature but eventually they would all point towards one direction — inciting of racial feelings.

“Since the Government has been accommodating, there have been people who harp on racial issues thinking they can achieve their aims through demonstrations, boycotts and other means.

“We may keep quiet but don’t assume that our tolerance is unlimited.

ed. We will not hesitate to take the firmest action if such people exceed the limit,” he said at a lunch held in his hour by the Kinta Umno division here.

Dr Mahathir said that while many Internal Security Act detainees were released, this did not mean that the Government was afraid to detain those out to undermine the nation.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman, said that there were extremists today who had forgotten the 1969 racial clash and were not afraid of the re-occurrence of such incidents.

“Umno can also be racialistic and

hold bigger demonstrations if it wants. But what is the purpose of doing so in a multi-racial society. Being the ruling party, we want to ensure peace and we cannot act beyond the limits,” he said.

On religious extremism, Dr Mahathir said Umno had always practised moderation.

However, he said there were always people who tried to incite the moderates to become extremists.

“Previously there were no problems like one mosque having two imams or marriages being declared illegitimate.

“The people could attend any mosque and not worry but now factions have appeared,” he said.

“Umno is not greedy for power. The party admitted the MCA, MIC and later even PAS to share power. We were prepared to co-operate but PAS tried to weaken the other parties in the coalition and tried to strengthen its own position,” he added.

Dr Mahathir said that it was greed for power that had resulted in PAS splitting into three parties (the main PAS, Berjasa and Hamim).

Earlier, opening a mosque in Taman Kledang Jaya, the Prime Minister said Islam advocated intermingling among the Muslim community.