

PM: Beware power-crazy leaderships

NST 18 DEC 1985

UNITY among the people of Malaysia cannot be fully achieved as long as there are individuals or groups who have not placed national interests above their racial, personal or political interests, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He said it could not be denied that there were shortcomings in na-

tional unity, including Islamic unity.

But these shortcomings could be rectified, he added.

"The lack of unity among Muslims is due to groups attempting to instigate them against Government efforts to promote better relations among Muslims.

"There are also Muslims who purposely deny Government efforts in spreading Islam so as to split Muslims

who support the Government from other Muslims.

"Among these Muslims are those who brand some Muslims as infidels (*kafir*)... and so there is disunity among Muslims."

The Prime Minister said this during question time in the Dewan Negara. He was replying to a question from Senator Haji Abdul Hamid Haji Latif on national unity.

Senator Haji Hamid wanted to know whether disunity among Muslims was caused by the many political parties in the country and what action the Government planned to take to promote national unity.

Disunity

Dr Mahathir said the number of existing political parties by itself did not cause any difficulty in promoting national unity.

He said it was the attitude of the leadership of these parties that had indeed made it difficult for national unity. He did not elaborate.

He assured the House

that the Government would continue its efforts to promote national unity among the people.

He said the Government would promote the study and usage of the National Language without obstructing other languages; instil Islamic values; group schools of various languages in a single campus; and take other actions deemed appropriate for unity.

Dr Mahathir agreed with a suggestion by Senator Haji Shuaib Lazim that it was the power-crazy leadership of political parties that caused disunity.

Senator Datuk Kamaruzaman Ahmad asked in a supplementary question whether the Government planned to ban political parties with such power-crazy leadership that represented a threat to national unity.

The Prime Minister replied that the threat posed by these parties and their activities had not reached the stage to warrant a ban.