

Dr M HITS OUT AT PAS LEADERS

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KOTA BARU, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad said today that PAS leaders had lost their sense of direction and he called on Umno members to help them return to the right path.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said PAS had reached a stage where its members were not allowed to question their leaders whom he described as "religious fanatics."

He also said that PAS members had been forbidden to listen to Umno's ceramahs for fear that they might leave the party.

"PAS leaders are spreading lies about Umno and the

Government and have deviated from the true teachings of Islam by instilling hatred and advocating violence in their members and supporters," he added when launching the integrated agricultural project at Mu-long Lating, 6km from here.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir told a crowd of over 50,000 people at the Desa Darul Naim housing project that Umno had been working for Muslim unity and had never deviated from the original objective of uniting the Malays.

"We have a mission to bring back PAS members to the right path. It is no fault of theirs if they resort to

violence because it is their leaders who are at fault.

"As Muslims, it is our responsibility to talk with PAS members and tell them the truth. If they have lost their sense of direction, we must show them the right way," he said.

Dr Mahathir added that Umno was not afraid to face PAS politically, provided it stopped using religion to confuse the people.

PAS, he said, could not conveniently brand other Muslims *kafirs* simply because they did not subscribe to the party's ideology.

Dr Mahathir said that while the Government

"cracked its brains" to find ways to help the people, PAS leaders were all out to condemn every government policy and action.

On the agricultural project, Dr Mahathir commended the Kelantanese for their readiness to give up their land so that it could be worked collectively to help them earn a better income.

He said that the Kelantanese were known to be an industrious and enterprising lot who were willing to face challenges and change their way of life to better themselves.

He spoke of the need for

the Malays to work hard and face the various challenges so that they could be on par with the other communities besides being able to determine their future and the country's destiny.

"We can't isolate ourselves from the rest of the world. We must keep moving with them," Dr Mahathir said.

He added that it was time people in the rural areas find out why they were poor and backward.

"It is time that we find out whether our land is under-utilised or that the method of cultivation is outdated."