

Arqam books banned, says PM

By **KHAIDIR ABD MAJID**

THE Government will confiscate and ban the distribution of books and other publications by the religious group Darul Arqam and those published by others but related to the group's belief and teachings.

Prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said in Kuala Lumpur last night the Government is of the opinion that the group's teaching is deviationist and there is a need to explain to the public why it is so.

"We will take action against Arqam if the group continues with its efforts to confuse the public," he added after opening the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (Istac).

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also urged the institute and its participants to justify the role they are required to play.

He described the founding of the institute as a brave enterprise, as Muslims readily condemn other Muslims as heretics for the slightest difference of opinion or for questioning established dogma.

"If the institute is to be worthy of its name, then it must examine Islam as we find it today in order to find the rationale for the multitude of rituals and practices, the interpretations of the Al-Q&an, the Hadith and the Sunnah, which together make Islam not just a faith but a way of life," he said.