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Mahathir-leaders

LEADERS WRONG TO LET SUPPORTERS DELIVER SERMON, SAYS PM

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JITRA, March 22, (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight leaders who allowed their "supporters" to use the Friday sermon to hit out at other parties should be responsible for such action.

It was not proper for these leaders to claim that they did not know about the action of their supporters, the prime minister said after breaking fast and performing maghrrib prayers at Masjid Kubang Pasu, here.

Dr Mahathir's speech was apparently directed at PAS following a sermon delivered by Kelantan Islamic Religious and Malay Customs Council (MAIK) administrative officer Ibrahim Mamat, which was said to have criticised the federal government, during prayers attended by the prime minister at Masjid Bukit Marak, Kelantan, last Friday.

"Leaders who allow their followers to deliver Friday sermons which could split the Muslims are the ones who are wrong," said Dr Mahathir who is also MP for Kubang Pasu.

He regretted that MAIK, which had specially sent Ibrahim to deliver the sermon in place of the mosque's regular imam, Mohamad Yassin Awang, was prepared to lie that it did not know that the prime minister was present at the prayers. -- more

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"Do not lie during the fasting month. It is bad," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was impossible that MAIK did not know he would be praying at the mosque because before departing for Kelantan his political secretary had reminded him that MAIK might send its people to replace the regular imam to deliver the sermon.

He said he had been informed by Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Annuar Musa that Annuar had initially rejected the application to replace the regular imam to deliver the sermon.

"MAIK informed Annuar that it would send another imam and send the text of the sermon for him to check. Instead he (Ibrahim) delivered the said sermon which apparently was also delivered in other mosques. Don't tell me MAIK doesn't know," he said.

He said such things would occur if political parties had other intentions because the interpretation of Islam would be slanted for self-interest.

Dr Mahathir said he was all for it if political parties used the Quran and Hadis for the interest of Islam but using them for the party's political interests was not an Islamic teaching. -- more

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He said he agreed with the view that religion could not be separated from politics but this did not mean political parties or certain people.

He said it was true that during the time of Prophet Muhammad religion and politics were inseparable because then there were no political parties or differing interpretations of Islam and the religious sects had surfaced after the prophet's death.

On the hudud laws, he said the government also wanted to implement such laws but would not do it in haste or under duress.

"Islam allows many relaxations for the good of the Muslims," he said.

At the function Dr Mahathir presented Hari Raya cakes donated by the Kubang Pasu residents to the security forces on duty at the border.

Bukit Kayu Hitam Territorial Army Force 305 representative Lt Kol Syed Mohamad Syed Alwi and Deputy Superintendent Mohamad Abdullah of the Second Battalion, Police Field Force Bukit Kayu Hitam received the cake packets.

-- Bernama

▼23/03/00-23MST