

PM: Certain quarters using religion for politics

NOT 23 MAR 1995

JITRA, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said if certain quarters in Kelantan could not differentiate between politics in Islam and party politics, the country could be thrown into disarray.

The Prime Minister said it was obvious that some people in Kelantan were using religion to gain political mileage.

"They misuse the mosques and use Friday sermons as a platform to win political mileage.

"What they are championing is against Islam. Politics cannot be separated from Islam but there is no party politics in Islam," he said.

Dr Mahathir advised leaders of these groups to be responsible by teaching

their followers the true meaning of politics in Islam.

"Some of these leaders are devout in religion but fail to teach their followers the true meaning of politics in Islam. They allow their followers to misuse Friday sermons," the Prime Minister said.

He was speaking to the villagers of Kampung Kubang Pasu, Masjid Kubang Pasu here after breaking fast with them.

Also present were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman and State Executive Councillors.

Dr Mahathir said he was

saddened by the incident at the Bukit Marak mosque in Kelantan where the regular *imam* who was supposed to deliver the Friday sermon was switched at the last minute to allow an administrative officer of the Kelantan Islamic Religious Council (MAIK) to deliver a political sermon.

The incident happened when Dr Mahathir was in Kota Baru on Saturday for a day-long visit.

He said the incident was intentional because he was informed before the incident by his political secretary that there was a plan to switch the *khatib* (reader of the sermon).

Dr Mahathir said he went to the mosque to listen to a sermon on Islam but instead

it was turned into a political talk.

"During Ramadhan, we talk about the good things about people, we don't belittle others," he said.

He said if these groups continued to perceive party politics as part of Islam, there would be a tendency for them to place utmost priority on politics instead of religion.

"These people must understand that a party is a group of people who have the ambition to rule the country," he said.

He said during Prophet Muhammad's times, there was no party and people should not use Islam to achieve their own desires or interest to become Prime Minister.