

Kemas officials told to follow guidelines

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By Rosli Zakaria

CUKAI (Kemaman), Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the duty of the Community Development Department (Kemas) officials is to disseminate information on Government policies and to defend the policies.

"Their responsibility is to explain to the public what the Government is doing. But they must not campaign for individuals or represent candidates in party election," the Prime Minister said.

He said the guidelines issued by Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid on civil servants' involvement in politics were to remind the employees of their responsibilities.

"Kemas officials cannot do something that is against the guidelines. In fact, the guidelines issued by the Chief Secretary were not meant solely for Kemas officials but also for everyone," he said after opening the Pesama MK Furniture Sdn Bhd's factory at the Jakar 1 industrial estate near here.

He was responding to questions on the guidelines issued by Ahmad Sarji yesterday.

The guidelines prevent Government officers in the Top Management Group, the Management and Professional Group from attending any political meeting even if they are invited.

The guidelines are to pre-

vent any public misunderstanding on the position of Government officers following enquiries to clarify the General Orders forbidding Government officers from getting involved in political activities.

On Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba's statement that he would not back out of the contest for the post of Umno deputy president, Dr

Mahathir said:

"I have already made my stand on this. If they want to contest against each other, let them. However, if they can avoid a contest, then they should avoid it."

On whether such a statement would lead the public to make their own interpretation on the matter, he said: "This is a free country. Everyone can make their

own interpretation on the matter. Sometimes when I say 'no', people will interpret it as 'yes' and when I say 'yes', they will say 'no.' Therefore, I cannot say anything."

On whether the Press had been misquoting him, he said: "If I say the Press have misquoted me, they would come down hard on me."

In Kuala Terengganu to-

night, Dr Mahathir and Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali attended the marriage of Wan Hekmat, daughter of Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar, to Encik Mohd Shahreen Zainooreen Madros.

Also present were the Sultan of Terengganu, Tengku Ampuan Besar, Ghafar, and Cabinet Ministers.