

Dr Mahathir: Pas returning to old

KOTA BARU, Thurs. — Pas has returned to its old style of labelling as infidels those who do not support the party, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said he was sad that the Pas leadership was still relying on this strategy to win the support of the people.

He said Pas was just an ordinary political party and not an Islamic party as it claimed to be.

"Pas uses Islam only as a mask to influence the people but in reality it does not apply the true teachings of Islam," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the State Government dismissed those who opposed its directives, including

imam who observed all the religious obligations but not the political directives.

"I am sad that this trick is still being used even though Kelantan Menteri Besar Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat had at one time said the labelling issue was not Pas' work.

"Instead, Nik Aziz's own statement that Umno should not field a candidate

in the Lundang by-election can be construed as meaning that we are not Muslims if we challenge Pas," the Prime Minister said when replying to questions from reporters at a Press conference at the government guest house, here.

Nik Aziz had said that Umno should not field a candidate in the Lundang by-election if it professed to

style of using 'infidels' label

struggle for Islam.

To a question on the Barisan Nasional's preparation for the coming Lundang by-election, he said preparations were proceeding well.

To another question on whether the Government would take legal action against Pas for exploiting Islam, Dr Mahathir said:

"We prefer to clarify the situation to the *rakyat* so

that they themselves will reject Pas. It is pointless for us to take action against the party.

"We have people who possess the religious qualifications who can explain to the people the true teachings of Islam," he said.

On the Kelantan Religious Affairs and Malay Customs Council's decision

to prohibit Federal Ministers from using mosques for charitable functions, Dr Mahathir said the move was unIslamic.

"The mosque is a place where Muslims can gather to perform their religious obligations. The mosque belongs to all Muslims and not just a particular group," he added.