

PM: Ban on Arqam ideas

By NIZAM ISA

KUALA LUMPUR: The Government will ban Al Arqam teachings which have deviated from Islam and can cause disunity among Muslims, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here yesterday.

He said it was the responsibility of the Government to stop any deviationist teachings.

The Prime Minister also said he would not meet Al Arqam leader Ashaari Muhammad. "He considers himself a per-

son with world leader status. I have not achieved that status, so it is better for him to meet officers of Pusat Islam."

He said Al Arqam teachings which stated that Ashaari was a prophet had deviated from true Islamic teachings.

"At first we were not bothered with them as they only encouraged things like polygamy, which is permitted by the religion, but slowly they deviated to the extent of assuming that their leader is a prophet," Dr Mahathir told reporters after opening the Koperasi Usaha Bersatu 14th annual general meeting.

He said the Government's stand had always been clear that it was against the deviationist teachings of Al Arqam and not the movement itself.

"There are a lot of Al Arqam followers who do not understand Islam and the destination of the movement," he said, adding that this was why the Government was taking stern action.

On the involvement of MP for Batu Berendam Tamrin Ghafar with Al Arqam, Dr Mahathir said: "We will have to see if he is involved in the deviationist teachings before taking any action."