

MAHATHIR: NO MASS ARRESTS

GENTING HIGHLANDS: The Government will not carry out mass arrests of Al Arqam members as it is only after the movement's leaders.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there was no need to arrest the followers as they were not as important as the leaders, who were still stubborn and defied the government ban.

"We (Government) do not want to arrest them (the followers) ... we want to stress that the followers are not important, the ones that are important are the leaders who are still stubborn.

"(But) we will also explain to them (leaders) why such an action is taken against them," he told reporters after watching the third Asean Showjumping Competition at the Awana Horse Ranch here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on reports that Arqam followers were still wearing badges with the insignia and picture of their leader Ashaari Muhammad in defiance of the ban which was gazetted on Friday.

The Prime Minister also said the Government would continue to expose the deviationist teachings practised by Ashaari.

He said if Ashaari continued to preach such teachings, action would be taken against him when he returned.

"If he returns, we will question him ... and if he still wants to spread the word that he has the attri-

● TURN TO PAGE TWO

PM: Why we have to take action

● FROM PAGE ONE

butes of a God, conversing with the Prophet ... we will take action against him according to our law," he said, adding that the Government had to take such an action to ensure the people were not confused.

He also expressed regret that certain quarters were going from one village to another accusing the Government of taking unlawful action against the movement.

"This is not true, we don't want the people to be confused and to accuse the Government of taking illegal and unconstitutional action," he added.

Meanwhile, Kedah police yesterday picked up five followers of the outlawed movement.

Kota Star OCPD Asst Comm Bazari Yunus said the five who were wearing Al*Arqam attire with badges carrying the picture of Ashaari were nabbed at a roadblock in Alor Janggus at 3am.

They were released on a RM1,000 bail each after their statements were recorded.