

PM: We'll not allow Pas to commit cruel acts

**By Saiful Azhar
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JITRA, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government would not sit back and allow Pas to commit cruel acts against the people in Kelantan, including chopping off the hands of criminals.

The Prime Minister said the Pas version of the *Hudud* law punishes victims while actual criminals were often let off with minimum punishment.

He said: "For instance if two people, a Muslim and a non-Muslim committed a crime, the Muslim offender will be punished severely like having his hands chopped off while the non-Muslim offender will escape with a light sentence like a fine or a month's imprisonment."

The Prime Minister said the Government had conducted a detailed study on the matter and was convinced that the law passed by the Kelantan State Assembly in November last year was against the teachings of Islam.

Dr Mahathir said one of the main points in the *Hudud* law was that the punishment meted out must be fair. He said this when opening the Kubang Pasu Umno special delegates' meeting at Dewan Jitra here.

"However, according to the Pas laws, criminals are let off and the victim is punished.

"This is against the true teachings of Islam and should therefore be rejected," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Pas was only interested in gaining political mileage by using the issue in view of the coming general election.

He said Pas leaders were aware of this and would continue to harp on the issue.

Later, when newsmen asked him to elaborate on his speech, Dr Mahathir said the Government would take action against the Pas-led Kelantan Government if it implemented the Pas-created *Hudud* laws.

The laws could not be enforced because it was not in

'Pas hudud laws against Islamic spirit'

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line with the Federal Constitution, he added.

"The Federal Government cannot allow the Pas Government to enforce the laws which are against the Islamic spirit which calls for justice.

"Therefore, we will stop anyone who attempts to enforce the law and we have sufficient provisions in the Federal Constitution to take such action," he said.

Dr Mahathir said: "Umno did not reject *Hudud* laws but we are rejecting the laws created by Pas to gain political mileage."

The Prime Minister also explained the Government's action against the Al Arqam.

He said the action was not

politically motivated and the intention was solely to bring them back to the true path of Islam.

"There is no reason for the Government to find new political foes.

"If the Al Arqam members want to wear robes and cover their faces, it is their problem.... However, as a responsible Government we have to act when people follow teachings which have deviated from Islam," he said.

In his speech earlier, Dr Mahathir also called on all Umno members to accept the party's choice of candidates in the coming general election.

He said although some members were bound to feel disheartened for not being nominated, they should rea-

lise it was impossible for the leadership to propose that everybody became leaders.

"The party cannot nominate everybody as candidates. I hope all those who have aspirations to lead or think themselves as potential candidates are also prepared to face the possibility that they might not be nominated to contest in the elections," he said.

"However, we must realise there is only one such position ... If everybody wants to fight for this post there are bound to be problems.

"Therefore, every member should back the nominated candidate instead of bickering about who should stand in the elections," he said.

The Prime Minister also

spoke on the criteria for choosing leaders.

He said they should be chosen based on their ability to lead and not on their popularity or for emotional reasons.

Dr Mahathir also called on all members to brace themselves to face the coming general election.

"Everybody should be prepared and the party machinery should work smoothly without any hitches.

"If the party loses in the election, it would not be because of the Opposition's strength but because of our own weaknesses," he added.

Also present at the meeting was Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff who is the Kubang Pasu deputy division chairman.