

Dr M: We will act if Pas threatens security

SEREMBAN, Sat. — The Government will take action against Pas if its campaign against the call by Umno Youth to drop the word Islam from its party name threatened national security, party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Dr Mahathir, however, said it was unwise to take any action at this time as Pas would politicise the issue.

"If we were to force the party to drop the word Islam then Pas will go around saying that the Government was trying to discard the religion," he told reporters after addressing a gathering of State BN members at the Municipal Council hall here.

He said the Government was able to take action against Al Arqam as it did not have any political ambitions and was not a political party. "Even when we took action against the deviant teachings of Al Arqam, the foreign media said that the Government was against religious freedom when in actual fact we had defended the religion from being tarnished by such teachings."

He said although the Government viewed the problem of Pas making use of religion seriously, it had to be cautious in dealing with it as it did not want outsiders, especially the foreign media, supporting the party.

He said any action against Pas would result in the party gaining the support of the foreign media which had always been uneasy with the success of the Malaysian Government, under the leadership of Muslims.

"They prefer to see our country in chaos and as such they will support Pas not because they want to champion the religion but wish to see Malaysia in trouble."

He said Pas was only using the suggestion to drop the word Islam from the party name merely to fish for votes and frighten Muslims by telling them that the

Government was out to discard the religion.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had to explain to the people that Pas had hoodwinked them into believing that any action against the party was also directed against the religion. "Pas is not an Islamic party but was making use of religion for its own political gain."

On whether he faced problems in allocating seats for the next general election, Dr Mahathir said there was no special problem. He also said the coalition had yet to discuss the allocation of seats.

Earlier, during the gathering, Dr Mahathir emphasised the need for members to show their allegiance to the Barisan Nasional party rather than individual candidates.

He said no individual could become the Prime Minister of the country if he did not have the support of the party. He attributed the country's success and prosperity to the able rule of the Barisan Nasional Government.

"We have been able to concentrate on development and streamline administration because the Barisan Nasional has been in power since Independence."

He said many other democratic nations faced problems because of the frequent change in the ruling parties. "Policies keep changing as new parties come to power and the country is unable to concentrate on development since programmes cannot be carried out till their goals are achieved.

"Leaders will come and go but what is important is for the people to continue to support the Barisan Nasional Government. For us, it is not enough to have a simple majority. We need a two-thirds majority to enable the BN Government to continue with its agenda of bringing development, peace and prosperity to the people."

He said many other coun-

tries are amazed how Malaysia was able to develop despite its multi-racial makeup.

"This is because of the unique co-operation and the give and take policy among the coalition partners."

For instance, Dr Mahathir said there was no constituency in the country where Indians formed the majority.

"Nevertheless, we still give the MIC seats and even make sure its candidates win. This is because we need the support of the minority in Malay majority areas as, in the event they (Malays) are divided, then it is the support of the non-Malays that count in ensuring a BN victory."

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had become the envy of other nations as there was full employment and the people had become prosperous. "In fact there is a shortage of workers as there are over one million immigrant workers in the country at present."

He said the Government decided to give one month's bonus to the 900,000 odd civil servants because it could afford to come up with the RM1 billion allocation for the purpose.

Dr Mahathir said it was clear that the people were enjoying more prosperity now as could be seen in the number of car sales.

"In 1985, 57,000 cars were sold but now Proton alone is able to sell more than 100,000 units annually."

He added if the Opposition were to come to power then there would be only chaos as it did not have any programme or strategy to develop the nation and bring further prosperity.

Dr Mahathir said he dreaded the idea of holding general election as the choice of candidates meant a big headache for him.

"But what is important is that the people including incumbents must support the party. If their support is going to be based on the choice of the candidate, then it will spell disaster."