

Dr M tells why magazine's permit has been revoked

JOHOR BARU, Sat. — The Government cannot tolerate locally-published magazines which slander Malaysia and other countries, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Responding to reporters' questions on reports that the publishing permit for the magazine *Muslim Media International* has been revoked, Dr Mahathir said the magazine was using Malaysia as a base to scorn and revile Muslim nations and slander the image of Muslim leaders.

Through its articles, the magazine was trying to retard the growth of Muslim nations and added that such undesirable elements should not be given a base here.

"It was using democratic privileges to tarnish democracy itself. If such people are allowed to operate, Muslim nations will never progress," he told a Press conference at the end of his two-day visit to Johor.

The English Language *Muslim Media International* is published twice a month from its office in Petaling Jaya and circulated to local and foreign subscribers. Its publishing permit was revoked on Dec 15 last year.

Dr Mahathir said the magazine recently raised the issue of the calls made at the Umno general assembly where some delegates wanted the Government to remove the word "Islam" from the name of Parti Islam Se-

Malaysia (Pas).

"The magazine interpreted the call as a stand amounting to 'discarding Islam from Malaysia' and claimed that this meant there is no more Islam in Malaysia.

"This is a form of instigation which cannot be allowed. They do this deliberately and it shows that they have no responsibility," he said.

When asked why the Government acted only recently when the publishers have been operating in Malaysia for a long time, Dr Mahathir said the Home Ministry had received several protests from Muslim countries which were unhappy with the magazine's editorial contents.

"We warned the publishers not to do it. But they ignored the warning, thus forcing us to act," he added.

Dr Mahathir, who chaired a meeting with Johor Barisan Nasional leaders, said the discussion centred around preparations for the forthcoming general election and added that Johor was prepared for it.

On the criteria for selection of candidates for the election, he said there was no fixed formula.

On his visit to Johor, the Prime Minister said, the BN leaders have pledged to work hard to ensure victory in the election.

To questions on delays in development projects due to opposition party interference, he said the people

would have to bear the additional cost if they fall victims to such ploys.

"For the Opposition, it costs them nothing. But the people do not understand they have to bear the increased cost because of delays to projects.

"The Opposition parties are not going to pay compensation for the delays and so they instigate the people to stage protests and demonstrations but the delays cost extra expenditure and the people ultimately will have to pay for it."

Asked whether the Government would increase the pay of Ministers following a similar move in Singapore, he said the calibre of the leaders is not measured by how much they earn.

As an example he cited the case of the Petronas chairman who earns RM50,000 a month while the Prime Minister earns RM16,000.

"But I do not take orders from him while he listens to me and accepts me as Prime Minister," he added.

On statements by the Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat that the Government had not called for an election because it was "afraid", Dr Mahathir said the Barisan Nasional has been ready for the polls since 1993.

On the Sulabayan by-election in Sabah, he said, the withdrawal of the two independent candidates was not because they were "bought-over".