

Dr M: Muslims were united in the past

YAN, Sat. — Pas should be held responsible for the disunity among Muslims in the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

He said before the existence of Pas, the Muslims in the country were united.

"Before the war, the Malays did not bicker among themselves. But when Pas was formed just before the 1955 election, that's when the split among the Muslims started," he said at a meet-the-people gathering at Sekolah Menengah Sungai Limau Dalam here. About 3,000 people, including his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and incumbent Jerai Member of Parliament Badruddin Amiruddin, were present.

"They abused the religion because they knew Muslims obey the religion. Therefore, they used Quranic verses and gave their own interpretations to influence the people."

Dr Mahathir said when contesting the 1955 election, Pas leaders had been hoping to be "Yang Berhormat" and enjoy allowances.

The Prime Minister said Pas led by Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmi and Zulkifli Ahmad was against the country's independence.

"The Alliance was responsible for the country's independence and the British could not reject its demand because the Alliance also comprised Indians and Chinese."

"Because of their opposition to the country's independence, Pas lost all seats except the Gunung Semangol in Perak."

However, Dr Mahathir said Pas wrested power in Kelantan and Terengganu in the 1959 election by using religion and branding Umno members "infidels".

He said Pas had not stopped using the religion to win seats ever since.

"Besides that, the present set of Pas leaders are playing dirty to win over the people by pouring scorn on Umno leaders."

Dr Mahathir urged Pas members to realise their mistakes and return to the true path of Islam.

He also criticised Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat for protecting former deputy Pas Youth chief Mohamad Sabu who was charged with committing *khalwat*.

"Nik Aziz has fielded Mat Sabu in the Kubang Kerian parliamentary constituency, a Pas stronghold, in the election just to save him."

"Unlike Umno, when former Malacca Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik was linked with a young girl, we did not allow him to contest."