

PM: Only the people can guarantee safety

Security of non-Muslims also in their hands

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By CLAUDIA
THEOPHILUS

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues: Malaysians are the only ones who can guarantee the country's racial stability by ensuring that the present government continues to be in power

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it is not up to him but the people to provide security for non-Muslims.

"But some non-Muslims want to play with fire without wanting to get hurt. They think they can support this kind of people and get away.

"You can see that by supporting the wrong kind of ideas, you can get very hurt. If people want instability, then they can support them," he said after opening the Malaysian Structural Steel Association Convention 2000.

Mahathir was asked to comment on the killing of the two hostages by Al Ma'unah members before surrendering on Thursday after holding security forces in Sauk, near Kuala Kangsar, at bay for five days.

One gang member was killed in an earlier crossfire while the group was holed up in Sauk after a daring weapons heist at two Grik army camps in northern Perak five days earlier.

He believes that the killing of the hostages, notably non-Muslims, was done intentionally by the group, believed to be acting under the influence of hate politics.

"This is the ultimate result. They create hatred for

the Government so that people will support them and hate the Government but eventually they can't control the hate.

"Once you start playing around with this kind of thing, it is going to come to a stage where we lose control,"

he said, reassuring non-Muslims that the incident was not part of Islam but a deviant teaching.

"As I said yesterday, I'm quite sure that there will be people who will try to support this group by explaining that their intention was good and

that they were misled."

He also denied that the group had demanded for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to be set free.

He was also asked to comment on a recent *Far Eastern Economic Review* report speculating political uncertainty

and in-fighting in Umno during the post-Mahathir Malaysia.

"I don't think so. We're putting in place the necessary leadership and structures to ensure that the development of the country will continue and remain stable."