

Religious teachers also to blame: PM

SUN 22 JUL 2001

'Youth learn to hate and turn anti-establishment'

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat: The political inclination of some religious teachers is one reason why Muslim youth are discarding their religion to join occult groups such as Black Metal.

Some religious teachers are more interested in politics than in teaching religion to children, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Expressing the government's concern, he said religious classes have been conducted since independence in the belief that the Muslim youth will not easily discard Islam.

"But maybe these lessons

are ineffective. I don't like to say this, but if religious teachers incite hatred towards the establishment, young people will not have the basics of religion.

"What they will have is anti-establishment feelings and hatred towards others. So, don't be surprised when our children end up hating the establishment," he told reporters after launching the new mini-MPV Proton Juara at the KLCC today.

Asked why the Education Ministry was sluggish in monitoring such activities, Mahathir said it monitors the educational aspect and not what students do.

He said National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman is focusing on the matter as "it is more of a social problem than an education one".

Siti Zaharah had revealed the existence of Black Metal groups in the country last weekend.

"These cults actively recruit teens and students and teach them to be anti-establishment and anti-religion.

Police detained about 20 suspected cult members in Bukit Mertajam earlier this month.