

01/09/2001

Dr Mahathir: Students incited by outsiders

SEPANG, Fri. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he did not think Muslim university students intended to go against Islamic teachings; they were incited by outside quarters.

He said it had been found that politicians incited the students in the hope that the students would support their cause when they finished their studies.

"These political factions only put importance on winning general elections without thinking about the interests of religion, race and the country," said Dr Mahathir.

"If they feel like cheating, then they cheat. If they want to abuse God, then they do as long as they win."

He was responding to the incident where police arrested 16 people for holding separate Isyak prayers led by two imam at the Ar-Rahman mosque in Lembah Pantai on Wednesday night.

Reminiscing about his younger days, Dr Mahathir said Malays then were not divided by mazhab (school of thought) or had two imam. They prayed according to the teachings of the Sunnah Wal Jamaah.

"When I was small and went to pray I never saw any split," he said, but the situation changed when a certain political party came about. He said from 1959 the matter of calling other Muslims kafir (infidel) developed.

Dr Mahathir said the calling of other Muslims kafir was political and had nothing to do with religion but had come to a level where extremists wanted to overthrow the Government by force, shooting people dead and robbing banks, adding that he did not understand this type of politics.

"...no stop to this. In other countries, after the general election there is no more campaigning. No ceramah, no rallies. But here after the general election, there are a hundred ceramah every day.

"In the ceramah there is nothing else but hurling abuse at the Government. I have been called a dog, a firaun (pharoah), very cruel. Nothing else other than hating others. What did I do to them? If they win so be it ... want to be Menteri Besar, go ahead. Why should I stop them?"

(END)