

# Mahathir unhappy with high priest posters

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ALOR STAR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad regrets that a poster circulating in the Pendang and Anak Bukit constituencies has depicted him as a *paderi besar gereja* (a church high priest).

"It is slanderous," he said, when a reporter showed him the poster at a press conference here after giving out educational aid and bicycles from Padiberas Nasional Bhd to some 300 students at SK Sungai Baru here, yesterday.

"The opposition should not do such things," he said, explaining that Islam abhors slander and considers it worse

than murder.

"Why are they doing this when they claim to be an Islamic party?" he asked.

"An Islamic party should follow God's law and Islamic teachings," he added, referring to PAS which had claimed to champion Islam and had recently approved Terengganu's hudud and qisas laws.

Asked about incidents which Barisan claimed was linked to the PAS campaign, Dr Mahathir said it was the way of PAS.

He cited an incident at the Lunas by-election two years ago when opposition members

stormed into buses and seized the identity cards of passengers.

"They think they can do what they like. That is the problem with PAS. Their ways are really rough and violent. If such people are spread out all over, our country will face problems," he added.

On claims by PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat that violence was used because advice through *halal* means was ignored, the Prime Minister asked: "What was the *halal* advice made by PAS?"

"We will accept good advice. We had also advised

them, but they did not stop.

"We tell them not to confuse Muslims but they ignored us. We also have the right to be violent or hurl insults but we do not do that," he added.

On the chances of the Barisan Nasional in the by-elections, he said: "I think we have a chance (to win). Looks like we can win but we have to work hard."

Regarding his reasons to campaign in Pendang, the Prime Minister said there was no harm doing so as PAS campaigned all the time even when they were supposed to teach religion.

On the Barisan candidates, he said they were chosen because the coalition felt that they were qualified and could win.

He said Barisan did not have a rule that stated that candidates who had lost in the past could not contest again.

"I myself had lost in the Kota Setar Selatan seat in 1969 but I was asked to contest again later and I won," he said.

Asked what was his happiest moment during his 21 years as the leader of the country, Dr Mahathir said: "Everything."