

PM: Call to mobilise Muslims is senseless

By SA'ODAH ELIAS

DENGKIL: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has described as senseless a call to mobilise 100 million Muslims into a volunteer army to liberate Palestine from Israeli forces as most would only end up as "cannon fodder".

The Prime Minister said that there was no sense in sacrificing Muslim volunteers in a war against the Israeli army if they went about it without any strength and preparation.

"We must know why we want to go to war. Even if we

can mobilise that many Muslims, what is the point if they will end up only as cannon fodder?" he said.

He said that one should go to war only if there was a chance of victory.

"But what is happening now is they want to go to war because they are angry, they want revenge and they want to kill people, but in the end nothing is gained," he said when asked to comment on the call made by a general of Iran's Revolutionary Force for the Muslims to join a voluntary army to liberate Palestine.

Yahyia Rahim Safavi was

quoted by AFP as saying that if only 10% of the one billion Muslim population were to join the Muslim voluntary army, the Jews could be driven out of Palestine.

Dr Mahathir said it was time that the Muslims turned to science and technology to strengthen their position in the world scene rather than going into a war that they had no chance of winning.

"The problem now is that when we want to focus on science and technology so that we can protect ourselves, there are those who claim that we are concentrating on secu-

lar teachings," he told reporters after witnessing the handing over of five electric trams from Tenaga Nasional Bhd to Paya Indah Wetlands in conjunction with the wetlands' first anniversary yesterday.

Responding to a call by Kelantan Umno for him to reconsider his plan not to contest in the next general election, Dr Mahathir said: "I have already made up my mind to resign from everything. That is final."

He said he had been a Member of Parliament for too long and felt it was time he gave others a chance to con-

test as the Barisan Nasional candidate in his Kubang Pasu constituency.

When pointed out that the Kubang Pasu people had made a similar appeal for him to reconsider, he said people should understand that the time had come for him to let go.

"But of course I am not quitting politics totally. I will still help Barisan and Umno even after I have resigned.

"In fact, I should have more time to devote to politics after I retire compared to now as I am bogged down with work," he said.