

MAHATHIR-DEBATE

24
KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT.19 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT HE WOULD MAKE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR LIVE TELECAST OF THE PROPOSED DEBATE BETWEEN PAS AND UMNO ONCE HE RECEIVED OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION FROM PAS AGREEING TO THE DEBATE.

HOWEVER! THE PRIME MINISTER MADE IT CLEAR THAT UMNO WOULD NOT ACCEPT THE PAS PROPOSAL THAT THE DEBATE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES BE ON THE ACCUSATIONS OF KAFIR (INFIDEL) BETWEEN PAS AND UMNO.

HE SAW NO REASON WHY OTHER ISSUES SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO THE DEBATE, ESPECIALLY AS UMNO HAD NEVER/MADE ANY INSINUATION OF PAS MEMBERS BEING KAFIR.

UMNO WOULD AGREE TO DEBATE ON ONLY ONE TOPIC -- THE PAS ACCUSATION THAT UMNO MEMBERS WERE KAFIR, HE TOLD BERNAMA AFTER CHAIRING THE WEEKLY CABINET MEETING AT HIS OFFICE HERE.

+THE TOPIC OF THE DEBATE WILL BE CONFINED TO WHAT I SAID EARLIER (PAS ALLEGATIONS THAT UMNO MEMBERS ARE KAFIR.) UMNO HAD NEVER SAID PAS MEMBERS ARE KAFIR, SO WHY SHOULD THE DEBATE BE ON THE ACCUSATIONS OF KAFIR BETWEEN PAS AND UMNO?+ --MORE

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MAHATHIR-DEBATE 2 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS COMMENTING ON A STATEMENT BY PAS SECRETARY-GENERAL HAJI HASSAN SHUKRI THAT THE TOPIC FOR THE DEBATE SHOULD BE THE ACCUSATIONS OF KAFIR BETWEEN PAS AND UMNO.

IT WAS REPORTED THAT PAS HEADQUARTERS HAD SENT AN OFFICIAL LETTER TO UMNO SECRETARY-GENERAL DATUK SERI SANUSI JUNID AGREEING TO THE PROPOSED DEBATE ON THE TOPIC SUGGESTED BY UMNO.

THE UMNO PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY OFFICIAL RESPONSE YET FROM PAS AGREEING TO THE DEBATE AND NEITHER HAD HE SEEN THE LETTER SENT BY THE OPPOSITION PARTY.

ON PAS' WILLINGNESS TO NOMINATE ITS PRESIDENT? DEPUTY PRESIDENT AND ONE OF ITS VICE-PRESIDENTS TO TAKE PART IN THE DEBATE ON CONDITION THAT UMNO DID LIKEWISE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID. PAS WAS WELCOME TO DO SO BUT IT DID NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT UMNO WOULD FOLLOW SUIT.

+THEY ARE WELCOME TO SEND THEIR THREE TOP LEADERS ... BUT IT IS NOT NECESSARY THAT WE TOO DO SO,+ HE ADDED, --MORE

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MAHATHIR-DEBATE 3 KUALA LUMPUR

THEY WILL SEE THEIR (PAS) REPLY FIRST,+ HE SAID WHEN ASKED WHO WOULD BE THE THREE LIKELY UMNO CANDIDATES TO BE NOMINATED TO TAKE PART IN THE DEBATE,

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HAD SAID AFTER THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL MEETING LAST SATURDAY THAT THE REASON FOR THE PROPOSED DEBATE WAS BECAUSE PAS, HAD MADE THE SERIOUS CHARGE THAT UMNO WAS KAFIR AND UMNO WANTED TO PIN DOWN PAS BY ASKING IT TO PROVE ITS ALLEGATION IN FRONT OF THE PEOPLE OVER A NATION-WIDE LIVE TELECAST.

IT WAS DECIDED THAT BOTH PARTIES BE REPRESENTED BY THREE LEADERS EACH AND THE DEBATE SHOULD BE CHAIRED BY SOMEONE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH PARTIES.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID TODAY HE HAD NOT FIXED THE DATE FOR THE DEBATE AS HE NEEDED TIME TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS.

+IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT IF PAS REPLIES TODAY THAT THEY AGREE TO THE DEBATE, I WILL IMMEDIATELY SAY THAT WE ARE GOING TO DO IT NOW.

+WE HAVE TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR TV TELECAST AND OTHER PREPARATIONS.+ --BERNAMA