

D885

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MAHATHIR-INFIDEL
BM

-84 (P)
KUALA LUMPUR, DEC. 6 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD
TODAY DISMISSED A PAS REQUEST FOR A +MUZAKARAH+ WITH UMNO TO DISCUSS
ANY MOVE TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION ON THE +KAFIR+ ISSUE, SAYING THE
GOVERNMENT WAS ONLY AGREEABLE TO SUCH A DISCUSSION IF THE PARTIES TO
THE TALKS WERE SINCERELY DESIROUS OF SEEKING A SOLUTION.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WAS NOT IN FAVOUR OF ANY SUCH
DISCUSSION BEING TURNED INTO A FORUM BY CERTAIN QUARTERS TO ANNOUNCE
THEIR STAND OR THAT OF THEIR PARTIES.

PAS DEPUTY PRESIDENT ENCIK FADZIL NOOR HAD SAID YESTERDAY THAT
SUCH A MEETING WOULD ENABLE PAS NOT ONLY TO EXPLAIN ITS STAND BUT
ALSO TO CONTRIBUTE ITS VIEW TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANY NEW
LAW ON THE ISSUE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT IF THE MEETING WERE ONLY A
FORUM FOR EXPLANATION, THEN IT WAS NOT A MUZAKARAH BUT AN
INFORMATION SESSION. HE WAS SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER PERFORMING
THE TOPPING UP FOR THE NEW UMNO BUILDING COMPLEX IN JALAN TUN DR
ISMAIL HERE.

+THEY WANT THE MUZAKARAH TO GIVE AN EXPLANATION. WE DO NOT WANT
EXPLANATIONS, WE WANT TO RESOLVE ANY RELIGIOUS PROBLEM THAT ARISES.

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+A MUZAKARAH MUST BE TO SEEK A SOLUTION. WE WANT TO HAVE MUZAKARAH BUT THERE MUST BE SINCERITY ON ALL SIDES,+ HE SAID.

THE YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG, ADDRESSING A GATHERING AT THE NATIONAL MOSQUE YESTERDAY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS, SUGGESTED MUZAKARAH TO CLEAR THE AIR OVER THE +MENGKAFIR+ ISSUE WHICH HAD CAUSED A SPLIT AMONG MUSLIMS.

HE HAD SAID THE GOVERNMENT MUST ENACT LAWS TO ENABLE THE SYARIAH COURT TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST MUSLIMS WHO BRANDED OTHER MUSLIMS +KAFIR+.

ELABORATING, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT AS THE SYARIAH COURT WAS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE STATE GOVERNMENTS AND THE RULERS, IT WAS UP TO THE STATE GOVERNMENTS TO DRAW UP THE LAWS.

+MY DUTY IS TO FULFIL THE ROLE GIVEN TO ME BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. I DO NOT HAVE AUTHORITY WITH REGARD TO RELIGIOUS MATTERS.

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+HOWEVER, WE HAVE TO STUDY HOW ACTION IS TO BE TAKEN IN A SITUATION WHERE WE DO NOT HAVE JURISDICTION,+ HE SAID.

TWO DAYS AGO, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT INTRODUCE A NEW LAW TO CHECK THE PRACTICE OF +MENGKAFIR+ AMONG MUSLIMS.

HE SAID THAT WAS AMONG THE MEASURES THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN TO CHECK THE PRACTICE TO PREVENT A SPLIT AMONG THE MALAYS.

ASKED WHETHER WHIPPING WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE NEW LAW, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO CONSIDER THE PRESENT SITUATION BEFORE DECIDING ON THAT.

+IF WE FEEL IT IS RIGHT TO DO SO, THEN IT IS SO. BUT, THAT IS NOT THE ONLY WAY. THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO PUNISH OFFENDERS,+ HE SAID WHEN COMMENTING ON SUGGESTIONS BY ULAMAS THAT A CLAUSE BE INCLUDED IN THE SYARAK LAWS TO PROVIDE FOR A JAIL SENTENCE OR WHIPPING FOR THOSE GUILTY OF BRANDING OTHER MUSLIMS +KAFIR+.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WOULD REFER THE QUESTION OF DRAFTING THE PERTINENT LAW TO THE CABINET AND THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL ON HIS RETURN FROM A 10-DAY VISIT TO EGYPT, LIBYA AND MALI BEGINNING SATURDAY.

THE CONFERENCE OF RULERS, AT A MEETING THREE DAYS AGO, RULED THAT THE PRACTICE OF +MENGKAFIR+ AMONG MUSLIMS WAS +HARAM+ (PROHIBITED IN ISLAM) AND THOSE GUILTY OF COMMITTING SHOULD REPENT.

-- BERNAMA

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