

▼30/07/16-26MST

U GE 30-07 00235 EAL12

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Mahathir-Arqam

AL-ARQAM CAN FORM POLITICAL PARTY IF IT DOES NOT DEVIATE, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, July 30⁹⁴ (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the al-Arqam movement will be allowed to form a legal political party if it does not propagate deviationist Islamic teachings.

He said the government had allowed other groups involved in spreading the teachings of Islam to form political parties and no action has been taken against them.

Responding to questions from newsmen after 'opening the 23rd Gerakan Party delegates' conference at a hotel here, Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman, said there was no provision in the country to conduct a referendum just because one man thinks he is fit to become the prime minister.

Replying to a question on a proposal by al-Arqam leader Ashaari Muhammad that a referendum be conducted to determine whether he (Ashaari) or Dr Mahathir was more popular, he said that if Ashaari felt that he was fit to become the prime minister, he could contest in the election.

"I am not inviting him, I am just saying that if he wants to contest in the election he can contest properly ... but don't try and bring about deviationist teachings in this country because that is very dangerous," he said. -- more

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Mahathir-Arqam 2 Kuala Lumpur

The prime minister said the government had not taken action against al-Arqam before but now its leader (Ashaari) thinks that he has the attributes of God, "he says like God, he just says be it and it will be".

The government was taking action against al-Arqam merely because the group has deviated from the teachings of Islam.

"We are not worried about them politically but in this country we don't allow deviationist teachings and they have this man (Ashaari) who claims he has spoken to the Prophet personally, that in fact, the Prophet came to see him and called him Sir," Dr Mahathir said.

The prime minister said the government allowed the group to go on because in the early days it did not deviate but when its leader became too confident that he could influence his followers, he started thinking that he was the Messiah but the government does not believe that he is the Messiah.

"Now we need to explain to the people why we take this action, we need to get them to get away from this organisation and if they take actions against the law, we will take action against them," he said. -- more

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U GE 30-07 00250 EA118
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Mahathir-Arqam 3 Kuala Lumpur

Asked about PAS' aim to take control of Terengganu in the next general election, Dr Mahathir said the party was actually interested in gaining control of the wealth of the east coast state which earns almost half a billion ringgit annually.

"PAS wants to control the money, it is not for the sake of religion ... it sees the money because it is striving to use religion to gain power so that it can control the large revenue of the Terengganu government," he said.

The same went for the DAP, he said, adding that the party had proposed the Tanjung 3 plan to capture Pulau Pinang and may perhaps have a Tanjung 4, Tanjung 5 or even a Tanjung 10 each time there is a general election but every time it loses in the election.

He said the party always harped on communal issues in the elections, particularly regarding the Chinese in Pulau Pinang, by claiming that Malaysia cannot progress without the existence of opposition political parties.

Dr Mahathir said it was alright to have an opposition party which made constructive criticism but the nation did not need an opposition party like the DAP which did not do so.

The extraordinary development in Pulau Pinang, he said, was achieved not because of the existence of the DAP because states without the DAP had also developed well. -- more

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Mahathir-Arqam 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Responding to questions by a foreign journalist, Dr Mahathir said that all companies in the country were closely associated with the government because of the Malaysia Incorporated policy.

"It is the duty of the government to be associated with the business people because in Malaysia Incorporated, the government and the private sector work together to develop this country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he knew every single businessman, and businessmen have access to the government and he believed that the concept was the key to Malaysia's success.

The prime minister, when asked whether he would stop awarding contracts to huge companies that were closely associated with Umno politicians to curb money politics in the country, said government tenders were awarded either by open tender or through negotiated tender.

"Everybody, even foreign companies, have a chance to make their bids and normally everybody who fails to win a tender would consider it as unfair, but if they got it, then it was fair (to them)," he added.

"We think that the government and private sector have a duty to work together and develop the country and therefore we cultivate the acquaintance, the friendship of the private sector," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there were many business people who have failed in their bids but were very friendly with the government "but no one cares about them, but anybody who succeeds would immediately be said to be well connected."

"But all businessmen in Malaysia are well connected with the government, that is our policy of Malaysia Incorporated," he added. --

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