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Mahathir-Standardisation

MENTERIS BESAR AGREE ON FOCUS OF STANDARDISED IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC LAWS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 2 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the menteri besar have agreed that the proposal to standardise the implementation of Islamic laws in all states should focus on the criminal aspects.

The prime minister said they wanted to ensure that the standardisation did not focus only on matters like dressing.

"The MBs are very supportive (of the standardisation move), they see the problem.

"They would like to ensure that the focus is on people who rape their children and other people, those who beat their wives, take drugs rather than focusing on people's dresses," he told reporters after visiting the RM300 million Malaysian International Exhibition and Show Room (Mines) in Sungai Besi, here.

Dr Mahathir was asked about his meeting with the menteri besar to inform them of the agreement of the Malay rulers, except for the Sultan of Kedah, with the federal government's proposal to standardise the implementation of Islamic laws for all states.

The decision was made at the Conference of Rulers meeting on Thursday.

Dr Mahathir said that often the state religious officers and certain people "hid behind the rulers" in matters relating to religion.

"They say this is under the rulers' jurisdiction and not the administration's...in the state religious department too they say religious officers have nothing to do with the government," Dr Mahathir said.

He said the other matters discussed with the menteri besar included the abuse of the Friday sermons by certain parties for political purposes which were not in keeping with Islamic teachings.

The issue of standardising the implementation of the Islamic laws which differ from state to state arose after the Selangor Religious Council took three Muslim women to court for taking part in a beauty contest last month.

On the current haze over the country, which is believed to have been caused by forest fires in Sumatra and Borneo, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia wanted to cooperate with Indonesia to overcome the problem.

He said Malaysia was prepared to meet part of the cost of putting out the fires.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir said in his speech that Malaysians had proven time and again that they were capable of developing "mega projects" well.

"A lot of people are very sceptical about Malaysia's ability to build so-called mega projects but we have demonstrated again and again that in Malaysia, we can," he said.

Dr Mahathir said these sceptics should "reconsider their scepticism".

-- BERNAMA

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