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Chicken boycott: Don't act in haste, says Dr M

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged non-governmental organisations not to act in haste by boycotting chicken traders as innocent traders may also be affected.

The Prime Minister said a boycott was not the answer to the issue of high chicken prices.

"Some of them are not rich and are trying to earn a living through selling chicken. They earn RM20 a day and if we boycott them, how are they going to survive?" he asked.

"But don't just boycott everybody as many will suffer," he told reporters after opening an international conference on religious studies at the Palace of the Golden Horses hotel.

Dr Mahathir said price increases during festivals were not unusual when demand exceeded supply.

"But in Malaysia, the increase is not too steep. Moreover, we have a ministry which monitors the prices of essential goods. If there is an increase, action is taken to stabilise and lower it."

On a proposal from Sabah Wanita Umno that one of the three vice-presidential posts be allotted to a representative from the State, he said Umno could not entertain such requests as it did not practice parochialism.

The Prime Minister said if such a policy was allowed, it would only segregate the party along State lines.

"We have no such provisions ... if possible, we want the people to regard themselves as Malaysians and not to say that they are from Kedah, Perlis and so on," he said.

On Umno Youth's desire to attract more professionals, Dr Mahathir said anyone could join the party as long as they believed in its struggle.

"If they subscribe to this, they can come in regardless of whether they are professionals or not. People should not join for positions or personal gain."

On talk that the party's general assembly and election could not be held before April because branches and divisions had yet to hold their meetings, Dr Mahathir said the party had to comply with all requirements before elections could be held.

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