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Pas plan to close papers `extreme'

Noor Adzman Baharuddin

KEPALA BATAS, Sun. - Pas' intention to close several local newspapers and television stations shows the leadership is dictatorial and extremist, Umno supreme council member Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said today.

"Pas leaders are baring their teeth (menunjuk taring) even before they come to power," he said.

"They claimed some members of the local media are spreading lies when in fact, it is the Pas' official publication, Harakah, that is doing so," Mustapa said.

"Despite its affinity towards slander and false reporting, the Government has never opted to ban Harakah ... and this is the Government's stance on the matter."

Mustapa, who is also Second Finance Minister, was asked to comment on a front page report in Mingguan Malaysia today which quoted Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor as saying that he would force all newspapers and television stations which are pro-Government to cease their operations if Pas forms the new Government after the general election.

Speaking at a ceramah in Alor Star, Kedah, on Friday night, Fadzil also warned Berita Harian, New Straits Times, Utusan and TV3 against being rude towards the party.

He claimed the three news dailies and television station had also manipulated Pas leaders' statements including his.

Mustapa, who was here to give a talk on the economy and entrepreneurship to about 100 participants, said Fadzil's announcement also showed Pas leaders' refusal to accept dissenting views.

He quoted a recent example where Harakah had published a report intending to portray Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir as being an irresponsible leader.

The publication had reported that a rubber tapper, Kasim Osman, in Kampung Jeragan near Jitra, Kedah, had been living in a dilapidated hut when this was not so and that the 68-year-old himself had denied the Harakah report when Dr Mahathir visited him on July 20.

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