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`Rising number of spinsters reason for Kelantan not hiring beautiful women'

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MALACCA, Mon. - Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said he had no choice but to discourage the recruitment of beautiful women in State Government departments to "reduce the number of spinsters (anak dara tua) in the State".

"I do not know the number of spinsters in other States but in Kelantan, it is increasing by the year. As the head of government, definitely, I have to do something about it," he told a ceramah in Masjid Tanah last night.

Nik Aziz said with the ratio in Kelantan now standing at four women to one man, "we now have to deal with this new group (spinsters)".

"They do not get married for two reasons - because they are not beautiful and they do not have any asset.

"I am sure if they work and have money to buy property, even though they are not endowed with pretty faces, the men will still fall for them."

Nik Aziz said he still believed that pretty women who were unemployed would still get married due to their "good looks".

This is not the first time that Nik Aziz has raised issues on working women.

Saying the recruitment of more "less beautiful" women in State Government departments would help reduce the problem, he admitted, however, that he could not force the men to marry "less beautiful" women.

On July 19, Nik Aziz had told the State Assembly that he had "whispered" to his officers who conducted interviews, to employ "less beautiful" women.

But he did not give any reason for his instructions.

In March, Nik Aziz said the Kelantan Government was studying the possibility of prohibiting women from working.

He said this was because men were supposed to be the breadwinners in a family.

Nik Aziz claimed that working mothers would have insufficient time to nurture their children and bring them up well, and this could lead to social problems later.

Clarifying this later, he said if possible, women should not work if their husbands could afford to support the family.

On Sept 2, 1996, he said women civil servants should not use too much lipstick, adding that it was pointless for Muslim women to adhere to the Islamic dress code but continued to apply lipstick.

The Pas spiritual leader had said he was only trying to be fair to women not endowed with looks when he discouraged the recruitment of pretty women in State government departments.

He had said he assumed beautiful women would get married to rich men and therefore need not find a job.

He said they could rely on their rich husbands and this would result in wider employment opportunities for the "less beautiful".

His statement came in for widespread condemnation by women leaders.

During the ceramah, he said Pas was not against Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad but his "policies" which Nik Aziz described as "very secular".

"Umno, under his leadership, does not want to adopt the Islamic rule and teachings.

"We do not want to fight with this Umno president but we only want to

advise so that changes can be made (to this country)."

Pas strived to bring about the "changes" through its ceramah, he said, claiming that the Kelantan Government under his leadership had managed to stamp out corruption.

"I told investors that if they want to invest (in the State), they can ... but I remind them not to give money to government officers or politicians.

"If they still give, I told them I will tear their applications," he said.

He said the problem was perennial and "deep-rooted" when Kelantan was governed by the Barisan Nasional-led Government.

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