

26 OCT 2000

Khair-Ceramah

DR KHIR READY TO GIVE CERAMAH WITH NIK AZIZ IN KELANTAN

SHAH ALAM, Oct 26 (Bernama) -- Menteri Besar Datuk Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo today welcomed the suggestion by Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat that he (Dr Khir) hold a religious ceramah with him in the PAS-run state.

He said he was prepared to do so provided he had settled the problems in Selangor, if there were any, and the ceramah was sanctioned by the religious authorities in Kelantan.

"God Willing, I will go to Kelantan to attend any ceramah session if invited. But if I want to go there, I need prior approval from the Kelantan authorities. If allowed, then I'll go," he told reporters after attending the Deepavali open house of State Executive Councillor Datuk K. Sivalingam, here.

Dr Mohamad Khir was commenting on Nik Aziz's statement in Kota Baharu yesterday that a series of religious ceramahs be jointly held between him and other Menteris Besar.

He said the ceramahs, if held, could dispel suspicion on the ban imposed on him for giving religious talks in suraus and mosques in Selangor as the people could listen and make their own assessments.

He had said that if the Kelantan Islamic Religious Department (MAIK) refused permission, the ceramahs could be held at the Pulau Melaka Mosque in Kota Baharu. The mosque is under Nik Aziz's patronage.

Dr Mohamad Khir also said the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (JAIS) had stopped its investigations into the unauthorised religious ceramah by Nik Aziz in a surau and mosque in Klang recently.

He said the state government felt that the matter need not be prolonged.

The state government had decided to forgive Nik Aziz for his attendance in previous ceramahs and hoped that such incidents would not recur, he said.

He said any speaker wishing to hold ceramahs in suraus and mosques must obtain approval from the authorities to preserve the credibility of the places of worship and to ensure they were not abused.

Asked to comment on the public admission by Parti Keadilan Nasional youth chief Ezam Mohd Nor that he and his party colleagues were involved in a smear campaign against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the United States and Europe, Dr Mohamad Khir said if the report was true, then Ezam was not loyal to the country and was ungrateful.

He said actions by certain opposition leaders clearly showed that they were fighting for their own personal interests or for a particular individual without considering the country's national interest.

He said they acted as though they were not bothered if the country was destroyed provided they achieved their objectives no matter in whatever way.

He believed that activities of the opposition were masterminded by outsiders who have a hidden agenda against Malaysia.

-- BERNAMA

AZH TS