

20/05/2000

Dr M issues directive to MBs

A. Razak Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - All Menteris Besar in Barisan Nasional controlled States have to streamline the curriculum of State religious schools and all other activities in mosques and suraus.

The directive was issued by Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today during a two-hour meeting with BN Menteris Besar at Putrajaya.

"The Prime Minister wants all Menteris Besar to take serious action in streamlining all forms of religious activities in their respective States.

"This is to stop people from being influenced by a political ideology which `manipulates' religion," said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Senator Datuk Paduka Dr Abdul Hamid Othman when contacted in Sik, Kedah today.

Abdul Hamid, who was present during the meeting, said the gist of the Prime Minister's explanation to the Menteris Besar was that they needed to play their part to ensure that mosques play a more effective role in the dissemination of religious teachings.

"Adjustments have to be made to the curriculum of State religious schools, lectures in mosques and surau.

"We also need to include explanations clarifying the role of religion in the context of our country so that we do not get overtaken by idealisms," he said.

Abdul Hamid said the meeting was a follow-up to the various suggestions and complaints made during the Umno general assembly which concluded on May 13.

During the course of the three-day assembly, several speakers took to the floor during the debates on the motion of religion to speak extensively on issues of mosques, suraus and other religious institutions being abused for political interests.

They raised issues like how some some State religious school teachers were inciting their students.

Asked whether the Menteris Besar's actions could overlap the role concerning religion held by the Malay rulers in the State, Abdul Hamid said the directive was not meant as an interference in the Sultans' authority in religious matters.

(END)