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Umno to prove Pas issued sacrilegious `fatwa`

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Umno will prove that several fatwa issued by Pas were sacrilegious and against the teachings of Islam, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the party was now gathering information and would furnish proof once it had done so.

"We will surely prove it ... we are now gathering information," he told reporters at MCA's Chinese New Year open house here today.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, was asked to comment on a challenge by Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor in the party's newsletter Harakah that Umno should prove its allegations that fatwa (religious rulings) issued by Pas were against Islam.

Last week, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Government would not allow the dissemination of sacrilegious teachings although the people were allowed freedom of speech and political freedom.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said the Government, through the Islamic Development Department (Jakim), would act against those who continued to issue such rulings.

Abdullah was commenting on statements made by Pas speakers at party rallies that Pas was Islam and if one voted for it, he or she would go to heaven.

Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on unity among the Malays after the conclusion of the recent general election.

He said the Malays were more united than before. Umno, he added, would also strive to bring the Malays closer.

"Actually, they have not been given enough explanation. I am sure that if we explain things to them, they (Malays) will (continue to) be united." However, Dr Mahathir said there were a few who did not want to do so.

On the code of ethics for the Umno elections in May, Dr Mahathir said the move to introduce the code was, among others, to do away with money politics.

"Any code will have weaknesses. But we must steadfastly hold to the spirit and principles of the code. We do not want money politics - but this depends on members."

Also present at the MCA open house were Barisan Nasional component party leaders and their spouses, Cabinet Ministers, ambassadors, High Commissioners and businessmen.

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