

14 MAR 2001

Shahidan-Gatherings

SHAHIDAN WANTS NATIONWIDE BAN ON PUBLIC GATHERINGS

KANGAR, March 14 (Bernama) -- Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim today called for a nationwide ban on all public gatherings and political ceramahs.

He said the ban announced in Selangor yesterday should be extended to all states as otherwise, speakers from the state would go to other states to "continue with their agenda".

"I will immediately write to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on this matter," he told reporters after chairing the weekly meeting of the Perlis State Executive Council.

Selangor police chief Datuk Nik Ismail Nik Yusof, in announcing the ban, said it was aimed at defusing the tension following recent clashes among rival groups in several settlements off Jalan Klang Lama in Petaling Jaya Selatan.

DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang, however, felt the ban was unnecessary as "political gatherings have no connection with the clashes and all political parties had acted most responsibly in trying to end the clashes".

Meanwhile, Shahidan said he was satisfied with the level of racial harmony in Perlis and was confident that this would continue on.

There was, however, some problems over the building of houses of worship by non-Muslims without referring to the State Government, he said.

"The State Government does not prohibit the building of places of worship so long as they abide by regulations," he said.

The Menteri Besar also said that the Perlis Government would standardise Friday sermons in all mosques in the state so that Muslims received up-to-date information about the country and the state.

On the action by a group of Muslims in the state to celebrate Aidiladha a day earlier than the officially declared day, Shahidan said the matter would be referred to the Conference of Rulers at its meeting on May 21.

-- BERNAMA

AD SK