

07 APR 2001

Mahathir-Islam

UMNO ULAMAS TO STUDY MISUSE OF THE WORD ISLAM BY PAS

TANAH MERAH, April 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Umno Ulama will study if PAS is misusing the word Islam in the party's name.

"If we feel that they are misusing the word "Islam", we can sue them in court and it will be up to the court to decide," the Prime Minister said at a dialogue session held during a get-together session with branch and division leaders of Umno Tanah Merah and Jeli divisions at Sekolah Menengah Teknik here.

He said the Conference of Rulers decided that no organisation would be stopped from using the word Islam on condition it was not used to mislead the public.

Dr Mahathir added that the rulers also decided that if the word Islam was used to mislead the people and was against Islam, then the organisation can be brought to court under existing laws.

"If we can prove clearly that the word Islam used by PAS is misleading the people and is not used in the proper context, then we can bring the matter to court and charge them for the offence," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Umno had many reasons to believe that PAS was misleading but required valid justification, like its impact on Muslims.

He added that the move to ban the use of the word Islam in the name of an organisation could not be done as many organisations would then have to undergo a name change.

The Prime Minister also asked Umno members who are aware of money politics at the branch or division level to raise the matter with adequate proof so that appropriate action can be taken.

"I myself will report to the Anti Corruption Agency for action to be taken if there is concrete proof of such happenings," he said.

He added that there were many who complained of money politics but declined to come forward when asked (to do so with proof).

The Prime Minister also said Umno would go to the grassroots to meet youths especially university students to bring them closer to Umno.

On the incidence of illegal immigrants making use of dual identity cards to help the opposition, Dr Mahathir said those caught with Malaysian identity cards would have them confiscated.

He said both Malaysian and Thai authorities would cooperate to curb the entry of illegal immigrants and also to explain to Muslim leaders in southern Thailand about PAS.

-- BERNAMA

BD DVS