

# Kayveas: Be cautious in making statements on issues

STAR - 4 MAR 2002

KUALA LUMPUR: People's Progressive Party president Datuk M. Kayveas said that the party had no choice but to issue a show-cause letter to its youth chief T. Murugiah for proposing that non-Muslim men be allowed to practice polygamy.

His (Murugiah's) transgression was too serious, he said when met at the launching of National Landscape Day by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Kuala Lumpur City Centre here yesterday.

He said the episode should serve as a lesson to other party leaders to be more cautious when making public statements, especially on issues that were sensitive to others.

Kayveas said that while the party appreciated Murugiah's good intention in wanting to address the problems facing illegitimate children, he should not have made a sweeping statement without first checking the country's history.

"By proposing that the government legalise polygamy among non-Muslims, Murugiah had overlooked the struggle of many activists that had worked so hard to institute law reforms to abolish polygamy in the country, except for Muslim men.

"It seems like he had overlooked that struggle that resulted in the law reform in 1982," he said.

Asked about the latest development, Murugiah had said that he was caught by surprise by the decision, made by the party's supreme council on Saturday.

Murugiah was not present at the council meeting as he was part of a Barisan Nasional Youth delegation on a four-day goodwill visit to Singapore.

"Murugiah should not have been surprised by the council decision. He is fully aware of how unhappy some of the party leaders and the majority of our members were over his statement.