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Mahathir-Students

CEASE HIGHLIGHTING ISSUE OF RACIAL SEGREGATION IN SCHOOLS, SAYS PM

SHAH ALAM, March 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today advised the various parties to refrain from further highlighting the issue of racial segregation in schools.

"I feel that there is no need to highlight the matter. People sometimes make mistakes," he told a news conference after opening the Selangor Barisan Nasional convention here.

"We'll have to consider that an apology may be enough...why fight," he said.

Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on the intention of two headmasters to file a RM1 million defamation suit against the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) and its secretary-general, Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam.

He regarded it more as an attempt to get money out of it and should not be pursued.

The prime minister said that he did not think that the NUTP had committed a grave mistake by claiming that there was racial segregation in 210 schools in the country.

"The people who are more guilty are those who oppose efforts to bring together students of the various races," he said.

Siva Subramaniam had alleged that racial integration was lacking in several schools but "in actual fact, he was wrong".

Dr Mahathir also said that he could not see the image or reputation of any party affected by the allegation.

He was also asked to comment on a call that he intervene in the infringement of copyright issue.

Dr Mahathir said that the government had taken various measures including increasing the number of enforcement officers, intensifying raids, banning the sale of pirated compact discs (CDs) and seizing millions of ringgit worth of CDs.

He said that the government was aware of the problems faced by artistes but efforts to overcome the problem would not be easy as there were parties still operating the business.

Among the factors that could thwart such efforts were weaknesses in enforcement and also the difference in the prices of genuine and pirated CDs.

However, Dr Mahathir said that reduction of prices of genuine CDs might not be easily implemented as recording companies need to recover their capital outlay whereas pirated CD producers need not pay a thing.

-- BERNAMA

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