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Najib: We want to identify the genuine religious schools

PEKAN, Sun. - Funding to all privately-run People's Religious Schools is being temporarily stopped to enable the Government to identify schools which genuinely teach religion and those which are being used as political instruments.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the Government realised that most of the pupils who attend these schools were influenced to be anti-government or anti-establishment.

"There are certain quarters who are using these schools as political instruments," he said when asked to comment on Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat's statement that the decision was a big blow to students in such schools as there were children of not only Pas members but also Umno members.

Najib, who is also the Pekan Member of Parliament, was visiting the Kampung Bangkong Orang Asli settlement in Bandar Due Paloh Hinai here.

"This does not mean that we will totally stop funding to all People's Religious Schools.

"We only want to identify those which teach religion and those which are being used as a political instrument," he said.

Nik Aziz was commenting on Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement on Friday that the Government would suspend all funding to such schools due to their deviation from the original syllabus.

In Kota Baru, Kelantan Umno has described as apt the Federal Government's decision.

Chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said such action was only expected from a responsible Government.

"We believe that the Government is aware that the students will have a bleak future if they do not acquire knowledge.

"What they are taught in some of these schools are only politics, hatred against the Government, and slander," he said after a meeting with Umno leaders from Kelantan and Terengganu.

He said he believed that the assistance would be reinstated once the schools were back on the right track.