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NIK AZIZ WELCOMES DR M-POPE MEETING NEXT MONTH

KOTA BAHARU, May 27 (Bernama) -- Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat has welcomed the impending meeting between Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Pope John Paul II in Vatican City.

He said the meeting offered an opportunity for the prime minister to explain to the head of the Roman Catholic Church the stand of Muslims and Malaysia on atrocities committed against Muslims, particularly in Palestine.

"It is the duty of a Muslim to accept the invitation of a non-Muslim to explain Islam," he told reporters here today.

Nik Aziz, who is head of PAS Ulama Council, said there was nothing wrong for Muslim leaders to have dialogues with their non-Muslim counterparts, and that he himself had visited a Buddhist temple in Kelantan twice.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir said that he had agreed to accept an invitation from Pope John Paul to visit Vatican City, and that the decision would be endorsed by the Cabinet.

Dr Mahathir is expected to make the visit in conjunction with his trip to Switzerland and Luxembourg from June 9 to 12.

-- BERNAMA

RAR YBY