

23/01/2002

`Pre-school teachers who incite hatred will be sacked'

PASIR MAS, Tues. - Head of Pas consultative council Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said the party was prepared to sack its kindergarten teachers who instigate children to hate a particular group.

"If there is any such element, we do not condone it," he said.

Nik Aziz added teachers in kindergartens managed by Pas or Pasti were given the responsibility to teach the younger generation to write, read and provide them with sound religious knowledge.

"We teach them to recite the Quran and say prayers since they are young.

"So, I do not see anything wrong with the curriculum. If there are teachers who sow the seeds of hatred in the children against any quarter, they will be dealt with," Nik Aziz said.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there might be a new law to stop kindergartens from spreading the culture of hatred against the Government.

He said the Government discovered that many kindergartens had deviated from their religious objectives. These kindergartens, he added, had been found to teach their charges to hate certain people and the Government.

In Pakistan, the Prime Minister said, the Government had closed down many madrasah because they were being used to teach people to topple the Government.

On whether Pas will be stopped from setting up madrasah, Dr Mahathir said: "If we discover they are teaching something else other than religion, teaching the people how to break the law as had happened in Pakistan, we will consider whether to allow them to do so."

Nik Aziz, who is Kelantan Menteri Besar, said the Government was welcomed to look at the curriculum.

"They have to come up with proof which part (of the curriculum) has to do with effort to hate the leadership," he said after a meeting with teaching staff of Lubok Tapah religious school which was destroyed by fire on Dec 16.

Nik Aziz said Umno and the Government should be thankful to Pas which had taken the initiative to open pre-school establishments for children.

"Now, many parents are busy with their work and cannot attend to their children's religious education and our kindergartens serve as an alternative so that the children will become useful citizens when they grow up," he said.

Meanwhile, in Kuala Lumpur, Pas central committee member Dr Mohd Hatta Ramli expressed disappointment over Dr Mahathir's statement.

He said there were various other avenues available to the Government to monitor the activities of the kindergartens.

He denied that they were being used to attain any personal gain for the party.

"What is the rationale in thinking that one could actually influence the minds of five-year-olds in just the one year spent in kindergartens?" he asked.

(END)