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Mahathir-PAS

PM EXPRESSES REGRET OVER NIK AZIZ'S DEFENCE OF MOHAMAD SABU

PUTRAJAYA, July 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed regret over PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat's defence of party leader Mohamad Sabu whose action in hurling abuses against Umno members is against the teachings of Islam.

"I'm amazed that a person claiming to be an ulama and a religious leader can condone the action of those who resort to undermining others by using abusive and foul language...I'm disappointed.

"When (Sik Member of Parliament) Shahnun Ahmad used foul language, he (Nik Aziz) came to his defence, when Mat Sabu uses abusive language, he comes to his defence...so what do you make out of this PAS leader?" he said after a ceremony to accord recognition for the successful staging of Le Tour de Langkawi (LTdL) 2002 and the launching of the LTdL 2003, here.

He was asked by reporters to comment on Nik Aziz's action in defending Mohamad Sabu, the Kuala Kedah Member of Parliament, who has been resorting to undermining Umno leaders using abusive language.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president and Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman, said that hurling abuses had been sanctioned by PAS leaders themselves to gain votes in elections including in the Pendang parliamentary and Anak Bukit state by-elections.

He said that they had resorted to such actions merely for political mileage and not in protest against what was said to be wrongdoings by Umno leaders against PAS as alleged by Nik Aziz.

"I do not know what wrongdoings (Umno members) have committed...point out the wrongdoings. If he has been hurling abuses because of some negative actions, what are they...why he is doing it?" he said.

"PAS does everything for political mileage...nothing done by PAS isn't for the purpose of gaining votes," said Dr Mahathir.

The prime minister also said that it was strange that PAS had raised the issue of the teaching of mathematics and science in schools in the English language, claiming that the move would affect the sovereignty of bahasa Melayu.

PAS leaders, he said, had previously stated that the special rights of the Malays would be abolished if the party were to come to power.

"I do not know why PAS is defending bahasa Melayu, whereas PAS has stated that if they were to come to power, they'll abolish the special rights of the Malays."

"(Acting PAS president Datuk Seri) Hadi (Awang) himself said that if the party were to come to power, it will abolish the special rights of the Malays," he said.

Asked to comment on the action by PAS members to obstruct Umno Youth and Puteri Umno members from conducting their campaign in the Pendang parliamentary and Anak Bukit state by-elections, Dr Mahathir said: "That is for the people to judge. If the people were to lend their support to those who do rotten things, then rottenness is what we get."

On the chances of the BN wresting the Pendang parliamentary and Anak Bukit state seats from PAS, Dr Mahathir said that the BN stands a good chance but members of all the component parties must work harder.

-- BERNAMA

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