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Isa-Pope

PM SHOULD MEET POPE JOHN PAUL TO DISCUSS ISSUES, SAYS ISA

SEREMBAN, May 26 (Bernama) -- Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad said today Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad should use the opportunity of meeting the Head of the Roman Catholic Church Pope John Paul to explain the current situation affecting Islam.

"There is nothing wrong in having the meeting .. it forms part of dakwah as well. At least the Prime Minister will be able to clarify that Islam is not a religion of extremism and terrorism."

"Perhaps there are slight doubts in the political aspect and perhaps there are groups out to exploit the opposition...but I believe the public will understand and we take pride that the Prime Minister has received such an invitation," he told the media after launching the Negeri Sembilan Malaysian Indian Muslim Congress (KIMMA) Convention 2002 here.

Also present was KIMMA President Mohamed Hanifah Mohamed Yusoff.

Pope John Paul had extended an invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Vatican City and to have discussions with him next month.

Mohamed Isa said there were not many leaders of the Islamic world who were given the opportunity to meet with Pope John Paul and the Prime Minister should take the opportunity to have discussions that would benefit the world community.

"In my opinion the meeting is an achievement for a leader of the Islamic world," he said.

In his speech at the launch of the convention, Mohamed Isa urged leaders at all levels of the Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties to continuously update on issues related to the government or those highlighted by the opposition to enhance the people's confidence in the BN.

"If the party do not clarify issues or are reluctant to explain certain matters, I am concerned that people will be confused and that would create problems for us," he said.

The opposition would gather political mileage and take advantage of the situation if the people were confused, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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