

26 OCT 2002

Nik Aziz-Schools

REVIEW STATE FUNDING CUT TO RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS, NIK AZIZ TELLS PM

KOTA BAHARU, Oct 26 (Bernama) -- PAS spiritual adviser Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said today the government's move to cut off state funding to privately-run religious schools will result in PAS supporters hating Umno.

Appealing to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to review the move, Nik Aziz said it would affect all students in the schools irrespective of whether their parents were supporters of Umno or PAS.

"Besides that, it may raise tension and prompt accusations from PAS supporters that Umno is not serious about its declaration that Malaysia is an Islamic state," he told reporters when met at his residence.

Dr Mahathir announced after chairing an Umno supreme council meeting yesterday that the government had stopped providing per capita grants to more than 500 privately-run religious schools nationwide known as Sekolah Agama Rakyat.

The prime minister said this was because the schools were actually "political schools" where the students were nurtured into becoming anti-government.

Nik Aziz, who is Kelantan menteri besar, said he hoped Dr Mahathir did not take the decision simply based on calls by Umno leaders in the state who "did not think of the long term implications" of the move.

On Dr Mahathir's claim that some of the teachers in the religious schools were more involved in politics than in teaching Islamic studies, Nik Aziz said this was no different from Umno's action in using government schools for political cearmahs.

"So what's wrong if we did the same," he said.

Meanwhile, it is understood that the government move would not affect most religious schools in Kelantan because they were financed by the PAS-led state government through the Kelantan Islamic Foundation.

-- BERNAMA

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