

15 JAN 2003

Mahathir-Nik Aziz

NIK AZIZ INVITES DR MAHATHIR TO VISIT PANTAI SABAK

KOTA BAHARU, Jan 15 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who begins a two-day visit to Kelantan today has been invited by Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat to inspect Pantai Sabak, Pengkalan Chepa, where coastal erosion has damaged many houses and property.

Apart from winning the hearts of the affected people, the Prime Minister could also use his good office to speed up the RM40 million allocation pledged by the Federal Government to arrest the erosion problem there, he said.

"Coastal erosion is really bad out there with a mosque being engulfed by sea sand and a secondary school waiting next in line," he told reporters after chairing the State Executive Council meeting here.

Pantai Sabak encompasses five kampungs -- Tanjung Kuala, Sabak Tengah, Kemeruk, Pantai Dasar and Kampung Sabak with a total population of 1,500.

Coastal erosion first affected the area about 15 years ago and since then much of the fishing settlement had been lost to the sea including Kemeruk and Tanjung Kuala, Nik Aziz said.

Nik Aziz said as there was no specific allocation for the purpose under the current five-year Eighth Malaysia Plan, the State Drainage and Irrigation Department only obtained an initial allocation of RM1.2 million from the Agriculture Ministry to appoint a consultant firm to study the erosion problem.

The state government could only provide alternative sites for their resettlement and so far three such settlements had been created at Blocks A and B at Kampung Pulau Gajah and at Kampung Pantai Kemeruk here involving a total of 161 families, he said.

The Kelantan Government was looking for alternative sites for more people affected by the coastal erosion which was made worse by the recent monsoon, he said.

On the Prime Minister's directive to state governments to speedily gazette the Islamic Family Law Act to ensure uniformity, Nik Aziz said his government was agreeable to this but there could be some administrative problems.

Nik Aziz, who is also Chairman of the PAS Council of Ulama, proposed that the country's civil and syariah laws be standardised as the syariah laws were based on the Quran and Hadis.

Asked about the disclosures by Deputy Education Minister Datuk Abdul Aziz Samsuddin yesterday that some Peoples Religious School (SAR) teachers were threatening students that they would head for hell if they moved to national schools, Nik Aziz said slander of all kinds was thriving in Malaysia.

"The last time they said Hadi (Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang) was causing disunity among the people through his Amanat Haji Hadi...when Hadi rose and cleared his chest and challenged them, they remained silent," he added.

He said the people should be given the chance to choose the education stream they wished as they were advanced in their thinking and civilisation.

"SAR gives specialisation to religious studies based on Arabic and there is also the academic element involved... give the people the chance to choose," he said.

On the proposed debate on SAR between Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz and PAS Deputy Youth Chief Salahuddin Ayub, Nik Aziz hoped that this time it would materialise.

Turning again to the Prime Minister's visit to Kelantan, he said the organisers were making it political by lining the route to the Sultan Ismail College Padang where Dr Mahathir would deliver a speech to the people, with Umno and Barisan Nasional flags.

"They should instead put up the Jalur Gemilang so that people not supporting Umno or the Barisan Nasional will not fear to attend," he said.

--BERNAMA

BD RAR AAM