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Muhyiddin-PAS

PAS DIVIDING MUSLIMS, NOT UMNO, SAYS MUHYIDDIN

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 11 (Bernama) -- PAS' habit of "concocting and rebranding" Islam to attract political support is causing a split in the Malaysian Muslim community, Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today.

"We (Umno) are not hijacking Islam but it's the other way around. It's PAS that is hijacking the religion to suit its own political agenda until the community is divided," he said after witnessing the signing ceremony for tenants and service providers of the Berjaya Times Square, here.

Muhyiddin said PAS had preached and interpreted the religion to suit its needs and this was confusing the community and was unhealthy in the long term.

He told reporters this when asked to comment on a statement by PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, while opening the 44th PAS Youth Muktamar last night, that Umno's projection of an Islamic image was based more on "Islam cetak rompak" (pirated Islam).

Nik Aziz, who is Kelantan Menteri Besar, had said that people who had faith in Islam would join PAS and not Umno.

"We have a few Malay leaders who ride on this thing (of using religion for their political agenda) and put the people in this (confusing) situation. This should stop," said Muhyiddin, who is Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister.

He said Umno abided by the true teachings of Islam and had never deviated from the original teachings of the religion.

On another note, he said the foreign media had no right to question Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the nation's policies as Dr Mahathir was only answerable to the people of the country.

"They (the foreign media) have no respect for him. While the rest of the world recognise Dr Mahathir's achievements, the foreign media just refuse to accept this," he said.

He said this when asked to comment on the New York-based Business Week's threat to Dr Mahathir that it would publish adverse articles about the prime minister, the country and the ruling Barisan Nasional.

Revealing the threat to the media yesterday, Dr Mahathir said the magazine wrote to him on Sept 8, demanding his immediate response to the allegations of cronyism and corruption in Malaysia.

"The behaviour of the Western Press is despicable. I have now received a letter from Business Week which threatens me. They wanted to interview me but I have no wish to be interviewed by Business Week because the last time they did it they told a lot of lies.

"So now they have sent me a letter threatening me that if I don't see them or respond to their allegations, they are going to write all sorts of nonsense and nasty things about cronyism, oppression, dictatorship and all that," Dr Mahathir told reporters yesterday.

Muhyiddin said such acts by the foreign media were as though Dr Mahathir never did anything for the country but the true fact, recognised worldwide, was that the prime minister had steered the country towards development.

"This threatening behaviour is not only unbecoming of the Western press but also totally unacceptable. They do not seem to recognise what Dr Mahathir has done for the country...this is their attitude.

"I am very sure that Dr Mahathir will not succumb to this kind of

threat. They (the foreign media) should come and visit Malaysia to understand the transformation the country has gone through," Muhyiddin added.

-- BERNAMA

SR AHH JK