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Nazri-Debate

PAS EVASIVE ABOUT DEBATE BETWEEN NAZRI AND SALAHUDDIN

KUALA KANGSAR, Feb 14 (Bernama) -- The Minister of Entrepreneur Development Datuk Seri Muhammad Nazri Abdul Aziz claims PAS is being evasive about the Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) debate between him and the Pas Youth Council Deputy Chief, Salahuddin Ayub, at Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka on Sunday.

"The place, topic and moderator keep on changing and they raise all kinds of excuses each time there is a meeting between my representative and Salahuddin's representative," he told reporters after the korban prayers council at Keroh Hilir mosque in Padang Rengas, near here, today.

Initially, the Dewan Tunku Canselor in Universiti Malaya was proposed to be the venue for the debate, then Auditorium Angkasa was suggested and the latest was the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), Nazri said.

"The title has also changed. It started with a rather controversial topic `Kerajaan Mahu Menutup SAR' (Government Wants to Close SAR) and then it changed to `SAR: Siapa Pengkhianat' (SAR: Who's The Traitor) and finally `SAR: Cabaran dan Masa Depan' (SAR: Challenges and Future)," he said.

"The initial suggestion for moderator was Royal Prof Ungku Aziz followed by Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tun Mohd Zahir Ismail and finally was the Director-General of DPB Datuk A. Aziz Deraman," he said.

Nazri hoped the decisions would be final and there would be no further changes because the more important issue is Salahuddin's presence at the specified time and place.

He said the debate format will first allow Salahuddin to make the charges and then give Nazri a chance to answer those charges.

"After the debate, I will swear on the Quran. As a minister and member of parliament will swear that the government has never said it will close SAR. I hope Salahuddin too will be able to swear by the Quran," he said.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday had briefed Umno members on SAR, to clarify that the government will not close down SAR but would only stop funding temporarily.

"If certain parties want to reopen SAR and get financial help, they should appeal or register again. The government will consider such applications," he said.

-- BERNAMA

KAY VRN