

08/09/2003

PM: Hadi has no right to label Umno ulama as `silent devils'

JITRA, Sun. - Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang had no right to label Umno ulama as "silent devils", saying that it was actually the Opposition who were affiliating themselves with Satan.

Dr Mahathir said it was Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat who said that it was all right to befriend Satan as long the Opposition won the election.

"So what right does he (Hadi) have to label ulama in Umno as devils? Is he God?

"Does he know for certain if he is infallible or otherwise?

"He cannot make such accusations. Please provide a reason for saying that all these people are devils," said Dr Mahathir after chairing a meeting of Kubang Pasu Barisan Nasional here today. Dr Mahathir, who is Prime Minister, is Member of Parliament for the constituency.

Hadi was reported to have used the term "silent devils" (syaitan senyap) to describe the police, because they were not curbing sinful activities.

The Terengganu Menteri Besar yesterday clarified by saying that "silent devils" was a term meant for Umno's ulama.

"We, on the other hand, know that it is Nik Aziz who is willing to befriend the devil. As long as he wins the general election, he is willing to become friends with Satan," added Dr Mahathir.

"It is because of this co-operation with the devil that they make so many accusations, saying that God uses foul language (mencarut), that God is a gedebe, samseng (gangster).

"That is because of being friends with Satan, and when you befriend Satan, that is what happens," said Dr Mahathir.

Asked whether action could be taken against Opposition leaders for making such controversial comments as they could jeopardise peace in the country, Dr Mahathir said:

"If there is proof that it would jeopardise national security, then we will take action, but we know how their followers, in trying to look for excuses to create trouble, would say that they would create chaos in the country if we were to take action (against their leaders)."

On another matter, Dr Mahathir, who is Finance Minister, was asked whether the upcoming Budget 2004 which he would table on Friday would feature a suggestion for lower taxes for individuals, with the shortfall to be made up by increases in the tax for luxury goods and the "sin-tax" for alcohol and tobacco.

"Please wait, on the 12th you will know. Please wait, please be patient."

On his meeting with Kubang Pasu BN, Dr Mahathir said he asked all BN component party members to support whoever was selected as candidate for the constituency in the next general election.

"Don't question who he is, as long as he is the BN candidate, then we should vote for BN, and not vote (based merely) on the candidate, because elections are about forming a government, and one individual candidate, including myself, will not be able to form the government unless the BN wins.

"That is what I explained to them," said Dr Mahathir.