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Nik Aziz: Ridiculous to say I am competing with Hadi for popularity

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Pas spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said today it was "baseless and ridiculous" to say that he was competing with party acting president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang for popularity.

Nik Aziz said that he was not contesting any post at the party's election on Saturday, and thus had no reason to be involved in a popularity contest against Hadi.

"Throughout my involvement in Pas, I have only contested once (for the Kelantan Dewan Ulama head post in 1968) and until today I am still regretting that move," said Nik Aziz during a Press conference at the Pas headquarters in Taman Melewar near here.

Nik Aziz, who is Kelantan Menteri Besar, was responding to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's statement yesterday that Nik Aziz and Hadi were competing against each other to gain popularity.

Dr Mahathir said their statements recently were to impress their followers on who was the better man between the two.

Hadi had recently labelled the police as "silent devils" because he claimed they had refused to co-operate with the Terengganu Government in enforcing the Pas-enacted Hudud. He later claimed that his remarks were directed at Umno ulama.

On Sunday, Nik Aziz blamed the universities for producing people who committed bribery, adultery, sodomy and drug abuse. He said universities would continue to produce criminals if they placed less emphasis on moral studies.

He said today that Dr Mahathir's statement was perhaps aimed at causing a rift between him and Hadi.

Nik Aziz also hit out at certain academicians who had yesterday lashed out at Pas for blaming local universities for society's moral decline.

"They should have asked for a copy of my speech and understand it fully before airing their views. I said there was a need to set up university in Kelantan.

"I said although there were many universities around the world, the crime rate was still high.

"I was not blaming local universities.

"My speech was focused on akhlak (morals), which is the basis of Islamic studies," he said.