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Protest against Harakah for insulting Dr M

GOVERNMENT MPs yesterday protested against Pas and its publication Harakah for insulting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad by depicting him with a pig-like snout in one of their cartoons.

The issue was first raised by MP for Sri Gading Datuk Mohamad Aziz, in a supplementary question to the Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Kadir Sheikh Fadzir on how such acts had affected the country's image and tourism efforts.

Mohamad said the two sets of cartoons, one depicting a khinzir or pig as the cause of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and another by its side which showed Dr Mahathir with a snout, and connecting him with the Sekolah Agama Rakyat issue, was an affront to the country.

Kadir replied that such accusations by Pas were the cause of the party's inability to win elections.

Later, the example of the Harakah cartoons was brought up again by MP for Larut Datuk Raja Ahmad Zainuddin Raja Omar who asked, in a supplementary question, how an Opposition-backed campaign to smear the country's good name, including the use of the offending cartoons by Harakah, had affected foreign investment to the country.

Ministry of International Trade and Industry Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Fu Ah Kiow said foreign investors were aware of the real situation in Malaysia and knew the Government had created a conducive environment for investment.

Later, speaking at the lobby, Mohamad questioned how Pas could allow Harakah total freedom to the extent that they could insult the Prime Minister.

Parliamentary Secretary in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Noh Omar said he was very disappointed and asked the Home Ministry to review Harakah's permit.