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Ungku Aziz rejects invitation to act as moderator

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Royal Prof Ungku Abdul Aziz has turned down an invitation to act as moderator for the proposed debate on Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) or Peoples' Religious Schools between Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz and Pas Youth deputy head Salehuddin Ayub.

Ungku Aziz said he had sent a letter on Tuesday to both Umno and Pas expressing his decision to turn down the invitation.

"I hope all quarters will respect my decision."

Ungku Aziz declined to say why he rejected the invitation.

Nazri and Salehuddin had agreed to the debate on a personal basis to be held on Feb 16 at the Dewan Tunku Canselor, Universiti Malaya.

On Jan 14, Chenderoh Umno Youth chief Shamsul Anuar Nasarah, who is Nazri's private secretary, and Pas Youth secretary Misbahul Munir Masduki after a joint meeting, proposed that Ungku Aziz chair the debate. Pas and Umno had in the past challenged each other to debate on several issues but none had materialised.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had on Oct 25 said the Government would temporarily stop funding all privately run SAR due to deviation from their original syllabus and because students in some schools were being taught to hate the Government.

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