

Stop embarrassing Anwar, says Nik Aziz
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INTERVIEW Political opponents and the mainstream media should not keep embarrassing opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, says PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

"For years the newspapers have embarrassed him. This is sinful because they are violating his dignity.

NONE"Anwar is a human being, not a piece of wood. He knows shame," the Kelantan menteri besar added in an interview with Malaysiakini last Thursday.

Condemning the smear campaign against the PKR de facto leader, Nik Abdul Aziz said Anwar would be rewarded in the afterlife and those who smeared him would have to bear his sins.

"Look at how things have flipped, after going to court, the person who tried to shame Anwar is now the person being shamed," he said.

Shaming someone, Nik Aziz said, is not part of the Islamic struggle.

'I'm tired but healthy'

Speaking at his official residence in Kota Baru, the veteran politician who celebrated his 81st birthday last Tuesday appeared energetic.

"I had my heart checked at the National Heart Institute (IJN) last week. Thank God, all is well," he said.

pakatan kedah mega ceramah 150112 nik azizIt was revealed in August that Nik Aziz had three blocked arteries and was undergoing treatment.

"That's how my health is... sometimes it sinks, sometimes it floats. On cold days, I will feel fatigue and get a cold.

"Coupled with heavy workload such as trips that require a lot of physical movement, it's a problem for me."

However, he said, his work was important for "the afterlife" and that he was committed to continue on with his duties.

Among the challenges he faces as chief executive of Kelantan is the East Coast state's water supply problems, which have become an election topic for PAS' strong rival, Umno.

'Water woes not only in Kelantan'

However, Nik Aziz said, Kelantan was not the only state facing water supply troubles, even though it was the only one being deprived of sufficient funding from the federal government.

The funding, he said, was crucial to substitute old pipes in the state. And this problem, he added, was aggravated by inconsistent supply of electricity to the state by Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB).

"When there is no electricity, the water pumps die and it takes up to six hours to restart them," he said.

Such electricity outage not only disrupted water supply but also incurred losses to businesses in the state.

"Its possible to sue,...we have plans to sue. But when to sue will depend on the situation... they must be made responsible for the losses," he said.

'Indelible ink not enough'

The more pressing issue in terms of the coming general election, he said, was the integrity of the electoral list.

"I have been informed that Malays from Thailand are being granted blue identity cards," he said.

Nik Aziz remains unconvinced about the electoral reforms the government and its agencies have announced, including the move to implement indelible ink on voters, because "the main concerns are not being addressed".

Nonetheless, he added, if the federal government respects democratic principles and does not engage in money politics, he is confident PAS will retain Kelantan.

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