

PAS Youth members protest outside NST premises

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By Nicholas Wong

PAS Youth members rallied in front of the New Straits Times Press (NSTP) headquarters in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur, this afternoon protesting its 'father of kafir' news report on the party's spiritual adviser Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

The group of about 70 also demanded that New Straits Times (NST) retracts the report and apologises for it.

The group marched to the NSTP building on Jalan Riong from the Saidina Abu Bakar As-Siddiq Mosque at 2pm, chanting slogans against NSTP and shredded copies of the NST in front of the premises.

Wilayah Persekutuan PAS Youth chief Kamaruzaman Mohamad (right) also threatened to call for a boycott of NST and all other publications under the group as well, besides boycotting the products of those advertising in the group's publications, if NSTP did not respond within a week.

“Our problem is not with the journalists, or the workers, but the editors,” stressed Kamaruzaman, calling on the crowd to boycott the group unless the article was retracted.

In addition, 100,000 PAS members will gather at Alor Setar, Kedah on June 1 to burn copies of NST if the paper refuses to listen, said PAS Youth secretary Khairul Faizi.

The crowd carried signs saying “Damn You NST” and “Boycott NST” and was led by PAS Youth elections director Mohd Sany Hamzan (centre in photo), who spoke heatedly as he heaped scorn on NSTP.

He charged that while it was valid to criticise Nik Aziz for his track record in managing Kelantan, or for his leadership, to call him a ‘father of kafir’ went overboard.

“Syaitan NST, babi NST (NST are demons, NST are pigs)” he roared to the crowd.

They then had a short prayer session before spreading out copies of the paper on the road for a ‘pijak (stepping)’ protest, with the crowd shouting “Pijak, pijak!”

Mohd Sany then asked the crowd if they would prefer trampling on the paper inside the NSTP compound to having the protest outside on the road, to which the crowd cheered in affirmation.

He attempted to lead the crowd inside, but was blocked by the police on duty at the scene and pulled back by Kamaruzaman. He eventually relented.

By 2.40pm the crowd had dispersed peacefully, after cleaning up the shredded papers on the

ground. Kamaruzaman also thanked Inspector Suhaibi for the police's cooperation.

At a press conference after the gathering, Kamaruzaman clarified that the protest was the next step following the memorandum that PAS handed over to the NST last week.

“We asked for an apology and the retraction of the article, but we only received a letter in return from them saying that the news was ‘complete’ and there was nothing to retract,” he told reporters.

Therefore, PAS continues to demand that the article be retracted and for an open apology within a week, he said.

If NST fails to respond, then they will launch their ‘Boycott NST’ campaign, he added.

“Not just NST but NSTP, including all the papers under the NST family. We will also have a campaign to boycott advertising in the paper, as well as a boycott of companies that advertise in the paper,” he said.

‘Investigate ceramah violence’

PAS also took the opportunity to condemn the violence at last night's PKR ceramah in Lembah Pantai, calling for an investigation into the incident.

The actions of the aggressors were uncivilised, said Wilayah Persekutuan PAS information chief Mohamad Suhaimi Abdul Aziz.

He lamented how such an incident could occur, commenting on the recent “trend” of aggression as the general election approaches.

“We hope an investigation will be made and that people will be brought to court over the matter,” he said.

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