

Rais: Okay to use gov't machinery for campaigns

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Information, Communication and Culture Minister Rais Yatim today defended BN's actions of using the Information Department's machinery for campaigning purposes.

He said that there is nothing wrong with the usage of government's machinery because BN is still considered the caretaker government from now until the nomination day.

"Now we are in an environment of carrying out duties as a temporary government. The government still exists under Article 43 of the federal constitution and all things that involve executive powers - such as Article 38 and Article 43 - on the powers of appointing ministers, also falls under the ministry's function, all ministries are to function as per normal procedures," he added.

"However, starting from nomination day, no government agency can take part in any programme that helps the election campaign of any one party," he stressed.

"It is wrong for them to assume that the Information Department or the Science Department can't come out with explanations in behalf of the government," he said.

He said that even though the nation is in an "interim government" environment, the powers of the government remains.

Malaysiakini had earlier reported that three vehicles belonging to the Information Department were used to facilitate the opening of BN's election command centre for the Batu parliamentary constituency on Sunday.

'Airtime offer was to broadcast only once'

Meanwhile, Rais said that the government's offer of 10-minute airtime for Pakatan Rakyat to present their manifesto in the state channel, Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM), would be broadcast only once, and not repeatedly over the campaign period.

"We (would) give 10 minutes only once, not on every campaign day. This is not about campaigning, it is only about explaining the gist of the respective manifestos," he stressed.

According to the minister, Pakatan can explain five full pages of their manifesto if they utilise the 10 minutes completely.

"I have conducted tests and in 10 minutes, we could read at least five pages of A4 papers with a one-line space between sentences," he said.

He added that the opposition's refusal to accept the offer was only an attempt to "mock"

RTM.

However, Election Commission (EC) chairperson Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof had previously said that the government's airtime offer to the opposition was to have been part of an ongoing series and not a one-time deal.

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