

'PM shouldn't degrade position by debating Dr M'

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By Lu Wei Hoong

Prime Minister Najib Razak should not have a public debate with Dr Mahathir Mohamad as this will demean the position of the prime minister, said Culture and Tourism Minister Nazri Abdul Aziz.

Nazri dismissed Mahathir as an ordinary citizen and thus has no locus standi to debate with Najib.

"For me, it's not a good idea. Why should my prime minister go down to the level of debating with an ordinary citizen?"

"If there is a debate, it should be between the opposition leader and Najib. And the platform is the Parliament," he told journalists at Universiti Malaya today.

However, when told about Najib's frequent absence from Parliament, Nazri defended his boss, saying the prime minister has a busy schedule.

He said other ministers could answer questions on Najib's behalf in the august house.

"What nonsense that Najib has to reply one person's allegation. Najib, as prime minister, has many things to do. I don't want him to waste his time," he said.

Last June, DAP Bakri MP Er Teck Hwa revealed that Najib, up to June 2014, had only attended 26 out of 358 parliament sittings in his first five years as premier.

'Dr M exasperated'

On Mahathir's sarcastic comment on blowing up PLUS highway to destroy his legacy, Nazri dismissed it, saying the former premier is merely expressing frustration.

"I think he is (showing his) exasperation. I don't think we should do anything. Let it be," he added.

Yesterday, Nazri hit back at Mahathir, saying that he has the right to hurl criticisms against Najib "every minute, hour, and day" but his views do not matter.

Meanwhile, Nazri said his ministry is going to list the Pua Kumbu, an Iban naturally-dyed woven textile as national heritage.

"I think it's an important heritage for Malaysia. I will recommend my department to come and see (Pua Kumbu)," he added.

He promised that his ministry will assist the Iban community in Kapit to preserve the environment.

This helps prevent the natural dye ingredient - made from local flora from the jungle - from being destroyed by deforestation.

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