

# DR M: GOVT CAN REVOKE ZAKIR'S PR STATUS

**PM says this can happen if preacher is found to have harmed nation's wellbeing**

NURADZIMMAH DAIM  
AND HASHINI KAVISHTRI KANNAN  
SEPANG  
news@nst.com.my

**T**HE government could revoke controversial preacher Dr Zakir Naik's permanent resident (PR) status if he was found to have done "something detrimental to the wellbeing of this nation".

Commenting on the issue, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said police were investigating the matter.

"At this moment, police are investigating if he is doing that (instigating racial tension) or not. If he is, then it is necessary for us to take away his PR status.

"We will need to take action to prevent him from making such (alleged) speeches, which tend to pit other races against each other. If that's the case, we may need to take action to stop him from making provocative speeches," he said after launching AirAsia's future air travel and digital airports exhibition at its headquarters, RedQ, here yesterday.

When asked if Zakir should issue a public apology for his statements, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't know about demanding a public apology. I don't think it will assuage the anger of many people.

"At this moment, we leave it to police to investigate the seriousness of the statements that he has (allegedly) made."

He was commenting on the growing calls for the authorities to revoke Mumbai-born Zakir's PR status and have him deported following the alleged statements.

He recently said Zakir could not be sent back to India because "he runs the risk of being killed".

He, however, said any country that wanted to have the preacher was welcome to do so.

It was reported that several ministers had joined the call for

Zakir's deportation following his alleged controversial statements against non-Muslims.

In response to calls for his deportation, Zakir had, during a religious talk in Kelantan, allegedly called on the Chinese Malaysians to "go back" first as they were the "old guests" of the country.

He had also provoked the ire of many when he allegedly compared the privileges that Hindus in Malaysia had to the Muslims in India by reportedly saying that the Hindus here enjoyed more than 100 per cent rights compared to Muslims there.

It was alleged that he had said the Hindus here were more loyal to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi than to Dr Mahathir, a claim that Zakir maintained was taken out of context.

More than 100 reports had been lodged against Zakir.

On a separate matter, Dr Mahathir said the government would consider calls made by people for the closure of Australian rare earth company Lynas Corp despite the fact the firm received an extension of its operating permit on Thursday.

"There has been an investigation (on Lynas) and it has been declared that there is no danger (in its operations).

"But of course, the people feel that we should get rid of Lynas. Okay, we will look into it," he said yesterday when asked to comment on the renewal of Lynas' operating permit for another six months.

Dr Mahathir said he hoped Lynas would adhere to the government's requirements.

Commenting on the anti-Lynas rally tomorrow, which, among others, would see demonstrators torching the Pakatan Harapan election manifesto, he said such action would not resolve anything.

"They can burn the manifesto, but they have to deal with this thing in a rational way. They can't just go around burning it and expect everything to be resolved. This will just make people angry."

Protesters claimed PH would have violated Promise 39, where it pledged to govern the country based on the principles of sustainability, if it allowed Lynas to continue operating in Malaysia.