

Umno will submit to Fatwa Council: PM

Special body can decide truth of Pas allegation: Mahathir

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KEMAMAN, Thurs. — Umno is prepared to submit itself to a special body on *fatwa* (religious rulings) to decide on the truth of the allegation by Pas that the party (Umno) and its members are *kafir*, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"But we will not allow Pas to make the judgment arbitrarily," he said. Though he did not elaborate, it is understood the body he referred to is the National Fatwa Council.

"It is not for Pas leaders to say whether Umno members are infidels. Who are they who can simply allege that other people are infidels," the Prime Minister added.

"There is a special body in the country which can decide on that and it is certainly not Pas.

"We are willing to submit ourselves to it to enable it to make

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the ruling because we are confident that we are not *kafir*," Dr Mahathir said at the opening of Wanita Umno's workcamp and the launching of a children's books writing competition at the Moral Training School here.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said those who were responsible for issuing *fatwas* were highly educated and experts in Islamic affairs.

'Not easy'

"It is not that easy to charge that other people are *kafir*. It has to go through a very long process and thorough investigation by the *fatwa*," he said.

"If we did something sinful, we would not become *kafir*."

"Even if we eat pork or do not perform the prayers five times

day, we are still not *kafir*. Sinful, yes but not *kafir*," he stressed.

He said there was no other appropriate way to counter the Pas allegation except through the debate because that party was cunning and clever at twisting facts.

"They will not admit it in front of us but in the kampungs, Pas leaders go around telling the people that Umno members are infidels.

"That is why we want the debate — to see whether Pas would repeat that Umno members are *kafir*, although we realise that the debate cannot determine the answer," he added.

Dr Mahathir also said that a number of groups had tried various means to cancel the debate but again stressed that the im-

portant thing was not the debate but the question of Pas alleging that Umno members were infidels.

"Their allegations have caused disunity among the villagers, resulting in the two imams problem, separate burial grounds and so on.

"That is why our struggle is not only for Umno members but also to save Pas members from their leaders," the Prime Minister said.

He said if Pas really upheld and abided by Islamic teachings, there would not be disunity among the Muslims.

All this would not have happened if not for Pas.

Also present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, Menteri Besar Datuk Haji Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid and Wanita Umno leader Datin Paduka Rafidah Aziz.