

SETTLING THIS ISSUE ONCE AND FOR ALL

NST - 7 DEC 1984

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — The Government wants to settle the mengkafir issue once and for all, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We want to settle it. We are not looking for any explanation," he said when commenting on a call by Pas deputy president Haji Fadzil Noor for a muzakarah to explain his party's stand on the issue.

Haji Fadzil made the call yesterday when responding to reports that the Government might introduce a law against those who branded other Muslims as kafir (infidel).

Dr Mahathir said: "If a muzakarah is held then it must be to settle the mengkafir issue once and for all.

"It should be one where the participants are sincere and honest about seeking a solution to the problem," he told reporters after attending a "topping-up" ceremony at the new Umno complex.

Dr Mahathir who is also the Umno president said any attempt to use a muzakarah to explain the mengkafir issue

would mean "it is not a muzakarah."

Haji Fadzil had said yesterday that a muzakarah would enable Pas not only to "explain its stand but also to contribute its views to ensure the effectiveness of any new law on the issue.

He had stated that his party's views were important as Pas was part of the mengkafir issue.

"It will be pointless for Umnoor the Government to obtain only the views and suggestions of other sources," he had said.

The Prime Minister had said on Tuesday that a law may be introduced to deal with those who accused other, Muslims of being kafir.

In an obvious reference to Haji Fadzil's rationale for a muzakarah, Dr Mahathir said: "If the muzakarah is to be used as a forum to explain the issue, as slated by one of their leaders, it is not a muzakarah but a briefing. We do not want explanations but to seek solutions."

Asked if he was aware that Pas had recently decided to meet officials of the Islamic Religious Council and the Majlis

● SEE PAGE 2, Col 6

'SYARIAH COURT HAS A ROLE

TO PLAY'

NST - 7 DEC 1984

★ From Page One

Fatwa to seek their views and discuss the mengkafir issue, he said he was not aware of such moves.

Commenting on calls by certain ulama to introduce flogging as punishment for those who branded others kafir, he said the Government needed to study such matters.

Dr Mahathir said, however, that there were many ways to punish people (as opposed to flogging).

On the Yang di-Periuan Agong's call to the Government to enact laws to enable the Syariah Court (Islamic Court) to act against people who branded others kafir, he said: "I feel it is right to introduce laws so that these cases can be brought to the Syariah Court. Subsequently, it is up to the State Government and the rulers.

"The Federal Government has no authority in religious matters. We have to study how to take action in situations where the Federal Government has no authority."