

Meeting: PM to decide

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon — The Prime Minister will decide on any meeting between him and Cuepaes and the five National Joint Councils (Staff Side) after he has been briefed on the latest developments relating to the wage claims dispute.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said these briefings would cover the developments over the last one week when he was away attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Nassau.

The Prime Minister, who returned here this evening, added that the briefings would include the outcome of behind-the-scenes efforts by unofficial representatives of the Government and Cuepaes and the five NJCs (Staff Side).

He declined to comment on such

last-minute efforts scheduled for tonight.

It is understood that the Government side to tonight's "unofficial" discussions is headed by a senior Minister, while a top Cuepaes leader is representing his organisation and the five NJCs (Staff Side).

Such meeting had been going for the last five days, it is learnt.

Nationwide picket

Dr Mahathir also declined to confirm a statement by Information Minister Datuk Rais Yatim last week that a meeting between him (the Prime Minister) and Cuepaes and the five NJCs (Staff Side) could be arranged before Wednesday, the date fixed by the public sector trade unions for the second nationwide picket.

"There is plenty of time to make the announcement," the Prime Minister said.

He also did not want to comment on Cuepaes' request to him for a positive assurance that talks would be held before it called off its nationwide picket scheduled for Wednesday.

The Prime Minister explained that it was the policy of the Government, as announced by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam last week, not to conduct its negotiations with Cuepaes and the five NJCs (Staff Side) through the Press.

Dr Mahathir also evaded questions on whether he was confident this time of breaking the impasse over the wage claims which will be one year old this month.

"I have to get briefings first," was all that he would say.