

Dr M: No discussion on Pas joining Barisan

THE April 9 Umno-Pas *muzakarah* touched on religious matters and the need to reduce tension between the two parties, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He said the discussion did not go into politics or that of Pas joining the Barisan Nasional.

"We only discussed religion and wanted to avoid any undesirable occurrences at this time. We don't want tension between Pas and Umno to reach a stage where there could possibly be riots or other undesirable events," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to the Press after chairing a four-hour meeting of the Umno Supreme Council at the Umno headquarters at Putra World Trade Centre. Umno deputy president Datuk Musa Hitam was among those present.

Dr Mahathir said originally, Umno had not intended to publicise the *muzakarah* but after a tabloid had reported about it, they had to explain the matter.

Following the report, some Pas leaders had denied that the *muzakarah* was held.

Following this, Umno Youth leader Anwar Ibrahim had to clarify that there was such a meeting.

The Prime Minister said those who denied the *muzakarah* did not have any information on it. In the first place, there was no official invitation to Pas leaders

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to attend the *muzakarah* and Encik Anwar had only invited them verbally.

He said the *muzakarah* adequately fulfilled its objectives more meetings would be held if there is a need.

Dr Mahathir said there were some Pas members who wanted to prevent the *muzakarah* from being held and did not want steps to be taken to ease tension between the two parties.

He said Umno is still against Pas. "If they want to fight us, it is no problem to us but we will do so based on democratic principles."

When asked whether Pas was sincere in the *muzakarah*, the Prime Minister said: "There are many members in Pas and it is impossible for the party not to have a single sincere person."

He said the Government cannot stop people from evaluating the Government's efforts negatively.

Dr Mahathir also announced that the Umno annual general meeting will be held from July 24 to 27. He said the council also instructed the Umno Wanita and Youth wings to set up their movement in the Federal Territory of Labuan.

He said they will co-operate with other component parties of Barisan Nasional in Labuan.