

PM gives 'no obstruction' assurance to Kelantan MB

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SHAH ALAM, Fri. The Prime Minister has given an assurance to the Kelantan Government that the Federal Government has no intention of obstructing development in the State or to stop giving development allocations to it.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad gave the assurance today to Kelantan Menteri Besar Haji Nik Aziz Nik Mat during a meeting at the Prime Minister's office in Kuala Lumpur.

Speaking to reporters this evening, Dr Mahathir said they exchanged views on the possibility of co-operation between the Federal and State Governments.

"I stressed that the Federal Government has no intention of obstructing development in Kelantan or to stop giving development allocations to the State.

"If we have any development programme, it should not be turned into a political issue."

The Prime Minister said this after opening factories of the Matsushita Air-Conditioning Corporation Sdn Bhd and Matsushita Compressor and Motor Sdn Bhd here.

He also laid the foundation stone of the Matsushita Air-Conditioning Research and Development Centre (Maerad) nearby.

On Federal-State politics, he said attention should be focussed on the different approach to religion.

"I told him that religion should not be mixed with politics. That is my view and I am not saying that the Menteri Besar of Kelantan agreed with me.

"I merely put forward my view to him. There are some parts in which he agreed."

Haji Nik Aziz told reporters that he was happy with the good reception and that he was hopeful that this would pave the way for better Federal-State relations.

"Dr Mahathir showed

great hospitality and seemed happy to meet me," he added.

Asked to comment on this, Dr Mahathir said: "There is a possibility. I don't deny that we need to have good relations ... but this depends on the respective reactions."

On the possibility of a *muzakarah* (dialogue) between Pas and Umno, he said relations had not reached such a stage yet.

Earlier, *Bernama* quoted a statement from the Prime Minister's Department saying that the two leaders discussed various topics, including current developments and relations between the Federal and State Governments.

They last met at the official opening of the Pasir Mas-Salor bridge in Kelantan on May 30.

Later in Kota Baru, Haji Nik Aziz said he and Dr Mahathir had agreed to put aside any ill-feeling between

the State and Federal Governments.

Haji Nik Abdul Aziz also agreed to Dr Mahathir's request that politicking be reduced and that both sides consolidate efforts towards developing Kelantan.

When met at the Sultan Ismail Airport in Pengkalan Cepa upon his return from the meeting, Haji Nik Aziz said he believed that the co-operation between the State and the Federal Government would take a positive turn following the meeting.

"Dr Mahathir told me that Umno Kelantan is also ready to put aside political differences and consolidate efforts for the benefit of the people in Kelantan.

"Basically, we agreed to concentrate on the State's administration and development."

He said he gave a list of 16 requests to the Prime Minister's aide which included projects under the Sixth Malaysian plan.