

Council chief's willingness for discourse welcomed

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today welcomed National Fatwa Council chairman Datuk Dr Ismail Ibrahim's willingness to enter into a *muzakarah* (discourse) with Pas deputy president Abdul Hadi Awang on the much disputed *Amanat Haji Hadi* (Haji Hadi's Decree).

The Prime Minister said this was important as the council felt the decree issued by Abdul Hadi about 20 years ago only confused the Muslims.

"It's good for them to debate the issue as one of the *fatwa* issued by the Council of Rulers was on the confusion created by the decree.

"As the National Fatwa Council also feels the decree is confusing the Muslims, such as who is a Muslim and who 'is not, it is better to have a debate," he said after meeting Information Ministry officials at Angkasapuri today.

Ismail, who is also Institute of Islamic Understanding director-general, said he was prepared to debate with Abdul Hadi, who is Terengganu Menteri Besar, on the decree.

Dr Mahathir said it would be good if the meeting could be held soonest. What was important was for the matter to be cleared once and for all.

Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor also welcomed the move by the council to debate the issue but did not want Umno to get involved.

To this, Dr Mahathir said: "We do not have a problem with that but if that is what Pas wants, we hope they too will be represented by Abdul Hadi alone."
