

No one should dictate terms, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Neither Umno nor PAS should dictate terms for the proposed Malay unity talks, said Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said both parties should approach the talks with an open mind.

He said Umno maintained that the talks should only be confined to Malay unity.

"This does not mean that we are rejecting PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor's suggestion that both parties also discuss about national unity.

"But we hope to focus the

talks only on matters involving Malay unity for now. We can discuss national unity some other time," he said after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said the agenda and the format for the talks would be decided mutually by both parties.

The secretaries-general of both parties would discuss the details of the talks, including whether it should be a four-eyed one or between the presidents or would include delegations.

He said many members had given their views on the scope of the talks during the meet-

ing, but the council did not make any decision on it except to keep an open mind.

"We will not dictate to them (PAS) and they will not dictate to us. We cannot make any decision on the agenda until we have discussed the matter with PAS," he added.

He said Umno was going ahead with the talks despite Parti Keadilan Nasional turning it down as the objective of the talks was to seek a solution to the Malay unity problem.

Dr Mahathir said he had received a letter from Keadilan president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail declining the invitation because "Keadilan was not a Malay party."

Dr Wan Azizah, in her letter read out aloud by Dr Mahathir at the press conference, had stated Keadilan was rejecting the invitation because it did not accept the premise of the talks that the Malays were divided.

She said the party believed there was no split among the Malays and that what had happened instead was that Malay support had shifted towards the opposition front.

Deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the council also endorsed the appointment of Tengku Ahmad Rithaudeen to head the Umno independent disciplinary panel.