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Pas to discuss PM's suggestion

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PETALING JAYA, Tues. - The Pas central working committee which meets on Sunday will discuss the suggestion for the proposed unity talks to focus on Malay special rights, Islam, Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and the position of the Malay Rulers.

Pas secretary-general Nasharuddin Mat Isa said today the suggestion for these matters to be the basis for the talks, as pointed by Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, would be discussed at length.

Nasharuddin said that Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor, who returned from Mecca early today, was briefed on the Prime Minister's suggestion.

"I can't say anything right now as it has to be deliberated at our central working committee meeting first," he told reporters who met him outside the Universiti Malaya Medical Centre here.

Earlier, Nasharuddin and several Opposition party leaders including Parti Keadilan Nasional president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, her deputy Dr Chandra Muzaffar, Parti Rakyat Malaysia president Dr Syed Husin Ali and DAP secretary-general Kerk Kim Hock, visited the Kampung Medan clash victims being treated at the hospital.

Dr Mahathir, in his explanation last week on the need for Malay-based political parties to sit for a discussion, said the meeting was not for any party to gain political mileage.

He said the proposed Umno-Pas unity talks were more towards enhancing co-operation and for the Malays to stand united on issues pertaining to Malay rights, Islam as the official religion, the National Language and the position of Malay Rulers.

The Umno-Pas unity talks, supposed to be held last Feb 19, was called off at the eleventh hour after Pas called for a postponement and set several pre-conditions.

Among the pre-conditions, which posed a stumbling block, were the demands for the re-instatement of petroleum royalty to the Pas-led Terengganu Government and the re-instatement of Pas party organ Harakah's publication permit to twice weekly from twice monthly at present.

Pas also demanded the Government do away with its intention to stop political parties from using the word Islam, as proposed by Umno.

Asked on the status of these pre-conditions in the wake of Umno president's latest remarks, Nasharuddin said the pre-conditions would stay unless the central working committee decided otherwise.