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PM: Umno to persevere with unity meeting

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UMNO president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the party will persevere to make the Umno-Pas unity meeting a reality despite the last-minute cancellation of the proposed meeting on February 19 by Pas.

"We are saddened that the meeting could not take place as planned.

"Despite the two demands by Pas for the Federal Government to reinstate the wang ehsan (to the Terengganu State Government) and allow the publication of Harakah (Pas' official mouthpiece) eight times a month, we still want to meet and hold discussions with them.

"We have said before and time again that we are willing to meet them.

"Even before we meet Pas, they have already set their demands. What is important is that we want to meet even though there is no topic," Dr Mahathir told reporters after chairing the party's Supreme Council meeting yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said Umno does not reject Pas' proposal to base the talk on national unity because Malay unity is also part of national unity.

"If there is no Malay unity, then there will be no national unity; and we must stress that Malay unity is not achieved to go against non-Malays.

"Even though we have unity, it does not mean that we will neglect and abandon the unity that exists in BN (Barisan Nasional).

"We will continue to cooperate with our Chinese and Indian friends, including other races in BN," said the party president, who is also the Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir added that the proposed Umno-Pas meeting is not about Umno merging with Pas because Pas as an opposition party fulfills the demands of the country's democratic system.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced that the Youth and Wanita wings will hold their assemblies on June 20. The party's general assembly will be held from June 21 to 23.

He also said Umno's disciplinary and management committee has agreed to the formula for the setting up of Puteri Umno's committee.

The committee will consist of 20 members, of which seven will be nominated by the Supreme Council and the remaining will consist of representatives from each state liaison bodies.

He also said the committee agreed on the ethical guidelines to be used for the upcoming divisional and branch elections.

"It will be based on the approved existing guidelines with slight changes with reference to the party's amended constitution," he said.

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