

Muhd Taib: Umno-PAS talks to continue
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Umno and its arch-rival PAS will continue to hold meetings but they will be limited to issues pertaining to Islam, said Umno information chief Muhammad Muhd Taib.
MCPX

He said Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi - who is also Umno president - had briefed the party's supreme council on this matter at its meeting this afternoon.

muhammad muhd taibAccording to Muhammad, the premier had stressed that while Muslims can differ on political issues, it should not be the case when it comes to religion.

He added that since Umno and PAS represent the Muslim community, there must be consensus between the two parties on matters concerning Islam.

Initially the muzakarah (dialogues) between the two parties were under the guise of Malay unity and Islam.

However, it was recently revealed that one of these meetings, Umno had offered PAS a number of high posts, including the menteri besar position, should the Islamic opposition party agree to form a joint government in Selangor.

Asked if there is a possibility of PAS crossing over into Barisan Nasional, Muhammad said this was not discussed at the three-hour meeting.

Responding to another question, he added there was also no discussion on the transition of power or the party elections.

According to him, the supreme council had only discussed about the ways to strengthen Umno.

No press conference

Meanwhile earlier, Umno supreme council members surprised the posse of waiting journalists and cameramen, who had been there since 3pm, by not holding a press conference.

While, as usual, there was no invitation to one, it has become customary for press conferences after the top council of the party meets.

It is rare for party leaders, especially Abdullah, not to meet journalists after such supreme council meetings.

At 6.30pm, a security guard emerged from the 39th floor to tell the waiting pressmen that there would be no press conference.

Subsequent checks with the prime minister's aide confirmed that Umno secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor had decided not to have any today.

Besides the issue of talks with PAS, the supreme council was believed to have discussed whether the top two posts in the party would be contested and the status of nomination quotas.

Meanwhile, an Umno disciplinary board press conference, for which journalists had been invited, was also cancelled.

The press meeting which was originally scheduled for 5.30pm was shelved after some two-and-a-half hours.

No reasons were given for the cancellation although a statement detailing the workings of the disciplinary board was handed out.

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