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Dr M and Nazri debate cancelled again

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Permit revoked because event could be a threat to public order, say Selangor cops

SHAH ALAM: The debate between Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz has been cancelled because there is a credible threat to public order, said police.

Selangor deputy police chief Deputy Comm Datuk Mohd Fuad Abdul Latiff said intelligence showed there would be certain groups who might cause disturbance on the day itself as well as before and after the debate.

“We came to this conclusion after receiving 18 police reports – not only from Shah Alam but all over Selangor, even Hulu Selangor.

“That is why we decided that it was best to cancel the debate,” he told reporters at the state police headquarters here yesterday.

Each report, he said, was being investigated.

Police had initially given their approval for the April 7 debate between Dr Mahathir and the Tourism and Culture Minister on Friday but revoked the permit the next day.

This came after Perak police also denied a permit for the same debate planned on March 25 in Kuala Kangsar.

During a ceramah in Cheng, Malacca, on Saturday, Dr Mahathir had questioned the

police’s decision to cancel the debate on the grounds of public order, saying that the venue, Karangkrak’s headquarters, was within an industrial area in Shah Alam.

He also said that even if there were police reports lodged by those worried about trouble, there were no residents there.

However, DCP Mohd Fuad refuted Dr Mahathir’s claims.

“Maybe he can come visit the area first. There is a residential area close by and there are people (working) in the industrial zone as well,” he said.

Asked on the possibility that the debate could be held in the future, DCP Mohd Fuad said “yes”, adding that police “will monitor and always put public safety first”.

When contacted, Karangkrak chairman and group CEO Datuk Hussamuddin Yaacob said *Sinar Harian*, which it publishes, was not giving up on making the debate a reality.

“We have to first respect the decision by the police.

“At the same time, we are planning something else that will be agreeable to all,” he said.