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Debate with Dr M an 'intellectual discourse'

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TOURISM and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz has given an assurance that his upcoming debate with Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be an "intellectual discourse", and not a petty quarrel.

The Umno Supreme Council member said he would not budge from his decision to debate the former prime minister on Saturday, despite the event not being aired live on television.

"Of course, (the debate) is still on. I met (Home Minister) Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and

he said that there was no problem," Nazri said at the parliament lobby here yesterday.

Nazri also said there was no need to air the event live, saying it was a debate between two "regular" individuals, and not between the government and the opposition.

"I think Dr Mahathir has no post (in the opposition) and he is not the opposition leader. I am also not the head of government."

Nazri made it clear that he would participate in the debate in

his capacity as Padang Rengas member of parliament and not as a Barisan Nasional or Umno leader.

Asked whether a winner would be decided, Nazri said: "No, I understand this is an intellectual discourse and not a quarrel between children. It is a serious debate. He can ask me questions and I will answer them."

Nazri said he did not mind if Umno members were not invited to the event, saying he wanted to address supporters of the opposition on various issues directly.