

## **Just have debate at a hotel, says minister**

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**By Faiz Zainudin**

### **Second finance minister says this will solve problems with getting a permit from police.**

KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and federal minister Nazri Aziz should just have their debate at a hotel, says Second Finance Minister Johari Abdul Ghani.

Speaking to reporters after an event today, Johari said this when asked to comment on Mahathir's criticism of the police decision to disallow the debate.

Yesterday, Selangor police cancelled the permit for the debate which was to be held at the Karangkrak Complex in Shah Alam on April 7.

"Just do it in a hotel, problem solved," said Johari.

Mahathir had described the prohibition of the event as not being due to concerns over public order but for fear of the truth.

The Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia chairman dismissed supposed fears expressed by "residents" claiming that there would be chaos due to the holding of the event.

After police cancelled the permit, Karangkrak managing director Hussamuddin Yaacob, the organiser, said he was bemused as police had earlier today given approval for the debate to go on.

He said preparations for the debate had already been completed but he would abide by the decision as it respected the government's decision not to pursue with the debate.

Today, Selangor police said they received 18 police reports against the debate and said intelligence gathered revealed troublemakers would disrupt the debate had it continued.

Mahathir had challenged Nazri to debate on issues such as the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and Bumiputra Malaysia Finance (BMF) controversies, and the RM2.6 billion donation from the Saudi royal family.

The earlier venue in Kuala Kangsar was also rejected by police.

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