

No homes, only factories around debate venue, says PPBM
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Mahathir and Mukhriz fume over excuse used for barring debate with Nazri, pointing out there are no residential houses in the industrial area in Shah Alam.

PETALING JAYA: Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has rubbished the police's assertion that neighbouring residents have complained about the planned debate between him and Nazri Aziz, saying there are in fact only factories in the locality.

The chairman of Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) was quoted by Malaysiakini today as saying that the venue, the headquarters of the Kumpulan Media Karangkraf, the publisher of Sinar Harian, is in an industrial area in Shah Alam.

"It's not as if there is anyone living there. There are only factories," he reportedly told a rally in Malacca last night.

According to the report, Mahathir also dismissed supposed fears expressed by "residents" claiming that there would be chaos due to the holding of the event.

PPBM deputy president Mukhriz Mahathir this morning posted on Twitter an aerial image of the venue taken from a satellite which shows it being surrounded by large buildings that resemble warehouses and factories.

"Objections from residents in the area? Are there homes surrounding Karangkraf in Section 15 Shah Alam?" he tweeted.

Police had yesterday given approval for the event, but Karangkraf managing director Hussamuddin Yaacob later said he had received a letter from Shah Alam district police chief ACP Shafien Mamat that the permit was cancelled.

He said the letter cited complaints from neighbours in the vicinity as a reason.

Mahathir was scheduled to have the debate with Tourism and Culture Minister Nazri on issues like 1MDB, the Bumiputra Malaysia Finance (BMF) scandal and the deposit of RM2.6 billion into Prime Minister Najib Razak's bank account.

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

It said Mahathir cited the Malay adage "berani kerana benar, takut kerana salah" (courageous when truthful, afraid when in the wrong).

Mahathir also reportedly said he was initially “excited” to have the debate even though Nazri was a “budak kecil” (small boy) as it would have given him the chance to publicly air his views on Najib.

He said Nazri became “smaller and smaller” when he kept asserting that he was not representing the government but himself, the report said.

The debate was originally scheduled for March 25 in Nazri’s parliamentary constituency of Padang Rengas.

After police disallowed the event from being held there, Karangkraf moved it to its headquarters in Shah Alam on April 7.

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