

Umno ready to meet Pas on Muslim unity: PM

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JITRA, Tues. — Umno is prepared to meet Pas leaders to discuss the setting up of a "Barisan Islamiah" to unite all Muslims in the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Umno president said that that while it was important for Muslims to be united, the ruling party's willingness would very much depend on the motives behind the proposal.

He said Umno would only meet Pas leaders if the proposal was intended to uphold Islam.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said that Umno would not agree if the setting up of the Barisan Islamiah was politically motivated.

He was speaking to reporters at the home of his personal representative, Ustaz Abu Bakar Hussain.

The Prime Minister was commenting on a statement by Pas vice-president Haji Nakhaie Ahmad who yesterday said that Pas was proposing the Barisan Islamiah as a way of strengthening unity among Muslims.

Haji Nakhaie had said that Pas would be meeting many organisations including political parties to discuss its proposal.

He had also said non-Muslims should not be unduly concerned about the proposal as "Islam itself does not advocate oppression of the non-Muslims".

The decision was made at its political committee meeting recently.

The Prime Minister who had just returned from Langkawi said he was impressed by the hydroponic vegetable plantation project in Padang Lalang, Langkawi.

Perfect site

The project is undertaken by Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM) graduate Marzuki Abdul Rahman, 24. He earns about \$3,000 a month from this vegetable venture using chemical fertilisers.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also visited the site of Pernas Que Hotel to be developed by Pernas Chain Hotel Berhad in Pantai Chenang.

He said the site of the hotel was very strategic and perfect for a tourist resort.

The Prime Minister said the first phase of the 250-room project would commence in January next year.

Pantai Chenang is a major tourist centre on Langkawi.