

PM's sincerity woos many away from Pas

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PASIR MAS, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's sincerity and honesty in promoting Islam is the single main reason for many Pas members to reject the party and throw their support behind Umno.

This was proven today when some 1,200 Pas and Hamim members submitted their application forms to join Umno at Kampung Banggol Che Wan in Meranti near here today.

For Encik Yusof Awang, a former committee member of Pas Meranti division, submitting his form signalled the breakaway from the party which he had supported for 35 years.

Encik Yusof, 48, and the others submitted their forms to Umno president Dr Mahathir.

He said that for 10 years, he had been observing Dr Mahathir's leadership and was convinced that he was capable of realising the people's aspirations.

In an interview at a flag-raising ceremony to mark the occasion today, Encik Yusof said: "Dr Mahathir has proven that Umno is

championing Islam and only Umno can fulfil our Islamic struggle.

"The setting up of an Islamic University and Bank Islam is sufficient proof that Umno is championing Islam."

Encik Yusof said he waited 35 years to see Pas leaders fulfil the promises to realise the party's struggle to establish an Islamic State, but it has remained merely a dream.

Pas leaders have not delivered their promises, he said.

And today Encik Yusof's former Pas flag was brought down and in its place the Umno flag was hoisted.

Another reason Encik Yusof and his followers are joining Umno is because they have expressed frustration with the Pas leadership following the party's decision to have a pact with Semangat 46.

He urged all Pas supporters to join Umno in the interest of Islam.

Following the defection of the Pas supporters, Encik Yusof said 17 Pas branches had been dissolved.

Encik Ibrahim Ismail,

deputy Pas divisional leader for Pasir Mas and the party divisional election security director, said he was touched by Dr Mahathir's sincerity and honesty to fight for Islam.

"He is an honest and sincere leader. Dr Mahathir has helped to inculcate Islamic values in the administration," he said.

"There is no point remaining in Pas and it is only wise to join Umno in the interest of Islam."

Kampung Banggol Sepuluh Hamim branch leader Mijan Yusof, 45, joined Umno because he believed only the party could fulfil the people's Islamic aspirations.

"For many years in Hamim, the leaders had been giving us empty promises," he said.

Another Hamim member, Abdullah Ghafar, 46, said it was useless to remain in Hamim.

"Only Umno can fulfil our aspirations to have Islamic values implemented," he said.

Earlier, at Kampung Bechah Palas, 196 Pas members submitted their forms to Dr Mahathir at the village.