

# UMNO WILLING TO DISCUSS TIES WITH PAS

Dr M: PAS should make the first move



By Chan Siew Wah

KUALA TERENGGANU, Wed. — Umno is prepared to talk to PAS about co-operation but it must be without conditions, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"All talks are naturally good. We welcome them. But, if there are conditions, they may pose obstacles to the talks," the Prime Minister said.

He added that it would be a burden to Umno if PAS imposed conditions or made demands because of the general election.

"We do not know what

the Malay community," Dr Mahathir said.

He said if PAS members and supporters cared to question the party leaders about their intention of setting up an Islamic state instead of blindly supporting them, they would have found out that the leaders no longer had the intention to form such a state.

Dr Mahathir said PAS had such an aim in the last general election when it fielded 96 candidates — more than half the number of the parliamentary seats in the country — but this time it was fielding

only 32 candidates. He said that assuming that PAS won all the 32 seats, it could not form an Islamic state without the support of Semangat 46, the DAP, All-Malaysian Indian Progressive Front and other opposition parties.

"Surely those parties would not help PAS to set up such a state," Dr Mahathir added.

Yesterday, *Bernama* reported PAS Dewan Ulama head Haji Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat as saying at a press conference that the party was willing to work with Umno if Umno was truly sincere about accepting Islam.

He had said that if PAS could work with Semangat 46 president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah who had spearheaded the ouster of the PAS government in Kelantan in 1978, there was no reason PAS could not co-operate with Umno now.

Haji Nik Aziz said PAS was still angry with Tengku Razaleigh, but because Semangat was prepared to accept Islam, PAS was co-operating with it.

He also announced PAS' programme for setting up the state government in Kelantan if the Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah won the general election.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on a statement by PAS that it was prepared to discuss with Umno the possibility of co-operation between them "through a third party."

The Barisan Nasional chairman also said if PAS sincerely wanted to have talks, it should initiate the move because PAS was the first to bring it up.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir met Barisan Nasional candidates, former elected representatives, Umno veterans and addressed more than 1,000 people at the official residence of Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Wan Mokhtar Ahmad.

In his speech, he said Barisan Nasional had done much more than PAS for the development of Islam.

"We built mosques, surau, set up an Islamic university and Bank Islam and organised Islamic courses in schools and universities. PAS, on the other hand, is willing to work with those who have driven a wedge between