

18 NOV 1996

Nik Aziz-Cooperation

PAS READY TO CONSIDER UMNO CONDITIONS

KOTA BAHARU, Nov 18 (Bernama) -- Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said today PAS is ready to consider any condition laid down by the Umno leadership for the setting up of a PAS-Barisan Nasional coalition government in Kelantan.

"I do not know what are the conditions in Umno's mind and so we just have to wait for their conditions," he said.

"In any negotiations there are bound to be conditions...Once we hear their conditions, we will put forward our own conditions. If there is anything more then we can discuss further."

Nik Aziz said he was optimistic that the coalition proposal could be implemented.

"In everything we say there is optimism, we cannot do it half-heartedly," he told reporters here.

He said to prove that the Kelantan Government was serious about the proposal, it had now been forwarded it to the PAS leadership, Nik Aziz said.

"It was up to the PAS central leadership to consider the proposal," he said.

The proposal for the setting up of a coalition government surfaced lately as a way of resolving the prolonged political crisis in the state following PAS' break with Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46), which had since been dissolved and the strained relations between Nik Aziz and the Kelantan Palace.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday said that he was not very optimistic about the proposal being implemented but he was prepared to discuss the matter with PAS.

Asked about PAS' main condition for the proposal to materialise, Nik Aziz said as had been explained several times in the past, the Federal Government should ensure that the Islamisation being implemented in Kelantan was not jeopardised.

"If we merge or unite, PAS' aim is to uphold the value of Islamisation which is being done in Kelantan," he said.

Nik Aziz also welcomed Dr Mahathir's readiness to accept an invitation from the Kelantan Government to make official visit to the state.

The Menteri Besar said it was up to the Federal Government to decide on a suitable date for the visit.

In Alor Setar, PAS President Haji Fadzil Noor said if Umno gave a positive response to the proposal, party headquarters would direct Kelantan PAS to work out the details.

"PAS headquarters is ready to discuss the proposal...we are open to the idea and so we are waiting for further developments," he said at his house.

-- BERNAMA

MFJ AAM