

SUN 14.5.2000

Dr M: Umno ready to talk with PAS

Umno is willing to consider having a **muzakarah** (discussion) with PAS if the party is open-minded and willing to accept decisions, said party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"But we found that PAS tends to say something in front of us and then say a different thing behind us.

"We are willing to have a **muzakarah** but we have to set the terms," he told a press conference after the end of the Umno general assembly.

He was asked to comment on a statement by Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, who proposed that a **muzakarah** be held with PAS to overcome Malay disunity.

Asked whether Umno will be more Islamic than PAS if they compete with each other, he said PAS is not Islamic as it deviates from the true Islamic teachings.

"They try to portray Islamic image by wearing robes and white **kopiah** (skull cap) but then tell lies.

"They said I fell from a horse in Argentina, that there is a tunnel in my house in Putrajaya for me to flee if anything happens, they said I was

dead and that I was too sick to perform the **haj**," he said.

Mahathir said Umno is Islamic enough already as other Islamic countries look upon Malaysia as a model Islamic country.

"There is no compulsion in religion. Don't expect me to wear a robe, wear white **kopi-ah** and then tell lies. Forget it," he added.

On another note, when asked to explain in general about students, the Prime Minister said they look as if they are critical towards the party and want it to make changes.

"Sometimes it seems as if they have rejected the party and its struggle but after explaining, they turned out to be strongly supporting the party," he said.

Asked about his ultimate goal, Mahathir said it is to put the country on track to achieve Vision 2020 and for that, Umno must remain in power.

Asked whether the post-Mahathir era is approaching, he replied: "Of course it is. I can't be here forever I'm mortal.

"I may get sick. I may drop dead. When everything is in place, I will retire."