

We'll talk, says Dr M

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'Umno prepared to hold discussions with PAS and Keadilan to promote Malay unity'

By **Cik Embun Majid**
embun@thesundaily.com

Shahrir wants Malay NGOs included in talks

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Utara Malaysia, recently that Umno should hold discussions with PAS and Keadilan to strengthen Malay unity.

Fadzil said: "If Umno is ready, PAS likewise is also ready but the discussion should not be held for Umno's political mileage."

Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan) president Datin Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail told Bernama that her party would like it to be held in the context of national unity and integration.

Umno supreme council member Datuk Shahrir Samad said the discussion should not only be held among political parties but also involve Malay based non-governmental organisations.

On claims that Umno's support from the Malays is dwindling, Shahrir said that remains to be tested. He said just because the Opposition won the by-election in Lunas, that does not mean Umno's support is dwindling.

Another Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Azmi Khalid said: "We are not look-

ing at the political divide of the people or the Malays, but on the future of the Malays.

"The opposition parties are always trying to politicise issues, it's up to them, everything they say seems and sounds political and now they are pulling in the non-Malays.

"The by-election is just a warning ... we have another four years to strengthen ourselves and nobody should make pre-judgments."

PAS Youth chief Mahfuz Omar called the proposed discussions "another political *sandiwara* (play)".

ALOR STAR, Sun: Umno is prepared to hold discussions with PAS and Parti Keadilan Nasional to promote and strengthen Malay unity.

"We will consider having discussions if the situation is conducive," Umno president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He was speaking to reporters on arrival at the Sultan Abdul Halim Airport in Kepala Batas near here this afternoon for a brief visit to the state.

Umno is said to have suffered an erosion of Malay support after the sacking of former Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from the party and the government.

Responding to questions on the special Umno Supreme Council meeting held at Putrajaya last night, Mahathir said the closed-door meeting (of 35 supreme council members) was held to discuss internal party problems.

"No special decision was made. It does not involve others," he said.

Asked whether problems in the party are serious, he said: "The problems are quite serious. I spoke about how to overcome them, the future of the party and the need to

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