

'Pas willing to bend rules to get Chinese support'

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PM: Nik AZIZ's pig farm visit shows this

By Kamarulzaman Salleh and Patvinder Singh

news@nstp.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Pas' reluctant and indecisive stand on the proposed Malay unity talks with Umno is mainly due to its apparent desire to be seen as a champion for the non-Malays, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

This is obvious from the recent move by Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz to visit Bukit Pelandok on March 11. Bukit Pelandok is a pig-farming area in Negri Sembilan which was hit by the Nipah and Japanese Encephalitis outbreak in 1999.

At the height of the outbreak, Pas leaders had hit out at Umno leaders, particularly its deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and associated him to pig rearing activities.

Now, the Prime Minister and Umno president said, even the Pas spiritual leader (Nik Aziz) has visited Bukit Pelandok in an attempt to offer assistance and to be seen as being concerned about pig rearers.

Dr Mahathir said Umno and the MCA, besides other Barisan Nasional component parties, had already been to Bukit Pelandok to of-

fer assistance well before Pas came on the scene. Pas had even criticised Umno for helping the pig rearers.

He was launching the national-level "Meet-the-People" session organised by the Federal Territory K3P group of listeners, viewers and readers, a new approach adopted by the Information Department to explain government policies to the masses.

Also present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Abdullah and other ministers.

"I think non-Malays will not be caught by this approach by Pas which hated the non-Malays very much. However, (today) they want to be their (so-called) champions."

He said Pas thought the Malay voters were already in their pockets and would not run elsewhere.

Dr Mahathir added Pas said they did not promise anything to the Bukit Pelandok residents.

"If they do not want to promise anything, why go (to Bukit Pelandok)?" he queried.

He said this was "the way" with the Pas people. It did not matter to them that their leaders had made mistakes, because to them it was a strategy to get votes.

And to get Chinese votes, he said, they would even go to pig farms.

Dr Mahathir said he did not believe the Chinese would be deceived by Pas' tactics as the party just wanted to fish for votes. Instead, he said, Pas supporters should open their eyes.

Dr Mahathir told Pas supporters not to follow their leaders blindly when they tell lies and make baseless allegations against Umno and other government leaders.

He spoke on Pas excuses in not wanting to meet Umno for the proposed Malay unity talks.

"They find all kinds of excuses not to meet. Sometimes they say we will meet on this day, later they say they cannot meet on that day. Another day. Maybe a week later. Wait for leaders to return from Mecca. All types of stories.

"They want to avoid meeting Umno because they do not like to see Malay unity, because to them if they are seen as supporting Malay unity, then the Chinese will not support them," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Umno's request for them to discuss issues related to Bahasa Melayu, religion, the Malay rights and the Rulers, was not in contrast to national unity.

"However, Pas tries to fish (for votes) among the non-Malays and place higher importance to national unity than Malay unity."