

PAS penning Islamic state concept

STAR 12 OCT 2001

By FARID JAMALUDIN

KUALA LUMPUR: The planned Islamic state by PAS has been drafted and its charter will be hand-delivered to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad when it is completed.

"I am working on it and it will be completed soon. I will personally hand it over to the Prime Minister and will be more than willing to clear any doubt he has in mind," PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor told *The Star* after addressing more than 4,000 people at an anti-America *ceramah* here on Wednesday night.

Fadzil, who was the last speaker at the *ceramah*, later led the crowd in burning US and Israeli flags to the shouts of *Allahuakbar* (God is Great).

He said he was confident that once the party forwarded its plan, the Islamic state aspired by PAS would not

become an issue anymore.

The party has been consistent in its ambition to set up an Islamic state in Malaysia and this stand yielded for PAS the Kelantan state government in the 1990 general elections as well as Terengganu in 1999.

PAS had contended that non-Muslims accepted its stand and this, it said, was evident in the fact that DAP, along with Parti Keadilan Nasional and Parti Rakyat Malaysia, had agreed to be part of the opposition front.

The stand taken by PAS, however, became an issue when a distant incident in Afghanistan, where the Taliban militia destroyed some ancient Buddhist statues, was brought into the Pahang state assembly and a government backbencher said it would happen in Malaysia if PAS ruled the country.

The chain of reactions affected the party's relation

with DAP which withdrew from the opposition front.

It also revived the long-standing feud over the issue between PAS and Umno, which the opposition party accused of being more concerned with secular principles than Islamic laws.

The matter came to a head when Dr Mahathir, at the Gerakan assembly last month, declared that Malaysia was an Islamic country and if PAS felt different it should "put in writing" what it deemed an Islamic state.

PAS countered with a suggestion that the matter be debated in Parliament but this was shot down by Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein.

Hishammuddin said there was no necessity for it as Malaysia had already achieved the status through its progressive, tolerant and moderate approach.