

Dr M: I planned to meet Fadzil during Aidiladha

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'Umno still keen on unity talks'

By Carol Murugiah

JOHOR BARU, Sun. — Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he had planned to meet with Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor at the latter's hometown in Alor Malai, Kedah, in the hope of seeing the unity talks between both parties materialise.

The Prime Minister said he had intended to meet Fadzil at the newly-built mosque in Alor Malai during Hari Raya Aidiladha prayers.

Unfortunately, Dr Mahathir said his hopes of meeting Fadzil, the key Pas figure in the proposed talks, were dashed as Fadzil would be away in Mecca performing the haj.

"The last time I went there, I met him. So, I was hoping that when I go there for Hari Raya Haji I will meet him again. But now he has decided to go to perform the haj.

"I do not know how many times he has performed the haj," he said.

Asked if he felt that Fadzil was trying to avoid meeting him, Dr Mahathir said: "That's what you said, not me."

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after attending the UIM Formula One Powerboat championships at Tanjung Puteri.

When asked if he thought Pas was trying to make it difficult for the discussions to take place, Dr Mahathir replied: "I do not know. You can draw your own conclu-

sions."

Fadzil had said that the earliest the talks could be held was in the middle of next month after his return on March 15.

On the unity talks, Dr Mahathir said Umno was still keen on holding them despite being unable to fulfil every pre-condition set by Pas.

"At first, they did not want to talk about Malay unity, but wanted to talk about national unity ... we agreed. Then other conditions emerged that needed discussion ... even that we agreed.

"Now they want us to practically give money ... that we cannot do. If they want to borrow money, (we) can (allow that)," he said.