

Let's meet first, PM tells PAS

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JOHOR BARU: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it was difficult for Umno to consider PAS' demands on the issue of money without first **holding** a meeting.

"Umno initially agreed with some of their demands, including changing the scope of the (Malay unity) talks to national unity.

"But when they practically asked for money . . . that we cannot consider," he said referring to the Terengganu oil royalty issue.

"We still want to sit down and talk with them. It doesn't matter if there is no particular subject (to be brought forward).

"Let us sit and discuss first before making any demands," he told reporters after witnessing the **final** race of the inaugural Johor leg of the UIM Formula One Power Boat championship here yesterday.

The Prime Minister said on Friday that the pre-conditions set by PAS — that its official publication **Harakah** be allowed to be printed eight times a month instead of the current twice a month and the reinstatement of oil royalty payments to Terengganu — were out of Umno's jurisdiction.

The Umno-PAS talks were initially scheduled for Feb 19 but were postponed indefinitely by PAS because it wanted

Umno to fulfil its **pre-conditions**, which included calls for Umno to stop "pushing" the Government to disallow the use of the word Islam in the party's name,

PAS has also called on the Government to create a more conducive atmosphere for the

talks to take place.

To a question on whether PAS was making it difficult to hold talks, the Prime Minister said:

"I don't know. You can make your own conclusions. I do not want to say anything or else I will be labeled a thief, Maha-

firaun, Mahazalim and so on," he added.

Dr Mahathir said he was hoping to meet PAS president Datuk Fadzil **Noor** during Hari **Raya** Haji as he would be performing prayers at the new mosque in the latter's **kampung** in Alor Malai, Kedah, but

was told that Fadzil would be performing his haj during that time.

When asked if the PAS president was trying to avoid meeting him, Dr Mahathir said:

"That is not what I said; that is what you said."