

# Umno still keen on talks with PAS, says Dr M

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'Even if there is no specific subject, it does not matter'

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**JOHOR BARU, Sun:** Umno is still willing to hold talks with PAS on Malay unity, even if there is no specific subject for discussion.

"We still want to meet them, sit down and talk ... even if there is no subject, it does not matter," Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said this when asked about the fate of the talks, originally scheduled for last Monday, and whether the talks could still be held.

Mahathir was here to watch the UIM F1 Powerboat World Championship race in Tanjung Puteri today.

He said Umno is doing

everything possible to ensure that the talks are held and is still waiting for a favourable answer from PAS.

"This is our stand despite the many demands made by PAS. It does not want to talk about uniting the Malays but about national unity, so we agreed to that. Later, it imposed several other conditions, to which we also agreed.

"But when it practically wants money, that we cannot give," he said.

Mahathir said he planned to meet PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor after Hari Raya Haji prayers at Fadzil's village in Alor Malai, Kedah, but unfortunately Fadzil will be away in Mecca for the haj.

He declined to comment when asked if Fadzil Noor does not want to meet him.

"That is your suggestion, not mine," he said.

In Cairo today, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the conditions set by PAS for talks with Umno cannot be resolved by the technical committees of both parties.

This is because these committees do not have the mandate to do so, Bernama quoted Abdullah as saying.

"The prime minister has said that we are willing to talk, no need to set conditions.

"Otherwise, it will only be discussions at the secretary-general level of both parties. And that is not the intention," he said, after a get-together with some 1,000 Malaysian students last night.

Abdullah is here to attend the 3rd Summit of D-8 countries, which began today.