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Khalil-Talks

DON'T IMPOSE TERMS, INCLUDE ALL IN AGENDA FOR TALKS, SAYS KHALIL

KUANTAN, Feb 25 (Bernama) -- PAS leaders fond of imposing terms before agreeing to discuss Malay unity with Umno can instead include everything they wish to raise in the agenda for the proposed talks, Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said today.

"Our stand is that it is more suitable to include whatever that they wish to raise in the agenda...any thing..whether topics already mentioned or new ones," he said.

Khalil, who is Information Minister and Kuantan Member of Parliament, was speaking to reporters after taking part in a gotong royong (community self-help programme) in Kampung Padang here.

PAS could, for instance, incorporate its demands relating to oil royalty payment to Terengganu and bi-weekly publication of its official organ Harakah, into the agenda for the talks, said Khalil.

"We already have the assurance from Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Umno is willing to discuss any topic that PAS intends to raise.

"As such, ideally all the PAS prerequisites should be mentioned in the agenda for the talks," he said reacting to PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor's expressed pessimism yesterday that the proposed talks would not materialise if Umno refused to fulfil PAS' three pre-conditions.

PAS decided to postpone indefinitely the proposed talks originally scheduled for last Monday citing non-conducive atmosphere and instead imposed the three conditions before the talks could proceed.

The first two were relating to royalty payment and Harakah's publication frequency and the third to a demand that Umno drop a proposal to ban the use of the term Islam for party names.

As for PAS' insistence for a conducive atmosphere for the meeting, Khalil said conduciveness should ideally cover a wider scope such as personal safety, and absence of provocation through demonstrations, among other things.

"From the feedback that I get, PAS leaders are still attacking Umno and Umno leaders in their speeches. Is this contributing to conducive atmosphere? But Umno pays no attention to all these as it prefers not to complicate the proposed meeting," said Khalil.

As for PAS' pre-conditions, Khalil said Umno too had received advice and views from all round that it should like-wise impose certain conditions for the proposed talks.

"But I am holding on to the spirit of the PAS president's reply to the Umno president's letter that mentions willingness to meet and talk," Khalil added.

-- BERNAMA

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