

26/02/2001

Khalil: Pas free to raise any issue

KUANTAN, Sun. - Umno today reiterated that Pas is free to raise any issue during the meeting between top leaders from the party and Umno.

Its secretary-general, Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, said as far as Umno was concerned, Pas could raise queries which they felt relevant to the discussion.

"Umno has authorised me to organise the talks between top leaders from both the political parties.

"Pas will be allowed to raise anything in the meeting, including issues related to the oil royalty and the publication of Harakah.

"We have got the assurance from Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the party (Umno) is willing to discuss anything which Pas wants to raise," he said.

Khalil told this to reporters after a "gotong-royong" programme at Kampung Padang this morning.

Commenting on the third pre-condition set by Pas on the use of the word Islam by political parties, Khalil said:

"This is the first time I am hearing such a condition. I do not even know how this third condition surfaced."

"If we were to adhere to all conditions set by Pas, I do not know what else Pas would set up," he said.

A local daily today reported that Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor said the meeting between Umno and Pas on Malay unity would be difficult to be made a reality if Umno did not accept the three conditions set by Pas.

On Pas' request that the talks be held in a conducive environment, Khalil said the conducive environment should cover a wider scope.

"According to the reports that I have obtained, Pas is still attacking Umno and our leaders in a number of states in the country.

"Is this how they want the meeting to be held in a conducive environment?

"However, Umno does not want to make an issue out of this as it could make the meeting with Pas more complicated," he said.

Khalil also said that he had received numerous suggestions and advice from Umno members to set certain conditions for the meeting between Pas and Umno.

"But I feel that the spirit shown by Fadzil in his reply to Dr Mahathir, in that Pas is willing to meet Umno, is very clear.

"That is what matters," he said.

(END)