

11 FEB 2001

Nik Aziz-Unity

NIK AZIZ THANKFUL TO DR M FOR INITIATING MALAY UNITY TALKS

KOTA BAHARU, Feb 11 (Bernama) -- Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat today expressed full support to the Feb 19 Umno-PAS Malay unity talks, saying PAS had long waited for such a discussion with Umno but there was no response.

"I'm grateful to GOD and thank the prime minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) for his readiness to hold the talks with all sincerity," he told reporters when met at Universiti Sains Hospital in Kubang Kerian, here.

He said he was happy that both sides had "open their hearts to meet and talk freely with no conditions attached" although PAS leaders had to persuade its supporters who disagreed to the talks.

"The misunderstanding between Malays in Umno and Malays in PAS was not over the fight for seats or property. There's no scramble for seats among us in PAS.

"If only Umno can change its secular policy to that of Islamic policy, there'll be no problems whatsoever," said Nik Aziz, who is also PAS spiritual adviser.

He said PAS' Islamic administration in Kelantan had changed the perception of non-Muslims in the state that Islam was a religion that advocated violence.

Dr Mahathir said after the Umno supreme council meeting last night that the Umno-PAS Malay unity talks would cover all aspects on unity.

He said each side would be represented by six members headed by the president.

-- BERNAMA

MNR BD TS