

09 MAR 2001

PAS-Scope

PAS WANTS SCOPE OF UMNO-PAS MEETING TO BE EXPANDED

ALOR SETAR, March 9 (Bernama) -- PAS wants the scope of an Umno-PAS meeting to be expanded from the topic of Malay interests under the federal constitution as proposed by Umno to various other matters as enshrined in the constitution including freedom to peaceful assembly.

Its secretary-general, Nasharuddin Mohamed Isa, said that PAS however agrees in principle to Umno's proposal for a meeting to discuss the position of Islam and the national language, the status of the Malay Rulers and the special rights of the Malays as enshrined in the constitution.

But, he said, PAS wants the scope of discussion to be expanded to include, among others, freedom of the public to peaceful assembly as provided for under Article 10 of the constitution.

PAS would need Umno to make its proposal formally, in black and white, for the matter to be discussed by the PAS central committee, he told reporters after a ceramah at Kampung Titi Teras, Yan, last night.

Commenting on the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is Umno president, yesterday that the meeting could be held informally between the leaders of both parties, Nasharuddin said that it could be held at the parliament premises as the parliament sitting would commence on March 19.

Nasharuddin, who is PAS Technical Committee chief, said that PAS would not budge from its pre-conditions fixed for formal PAS-Umno talks to be held.

PAS has insisted on the payment of oil royalty to the PAS-led Terengganu government to be restored, that its official organ "Harakah" be allowed to be published twice weekly instead of twice monthly at present, and efforts for the ban of the use of the word Islam in the name of political parties be called off.

PAS also wants the talks to cover topics relating to the position of Islam, federalism, the judiciary and the economy.

Meanwhile, in KUALA TERENGGANU, Terengganu Menteri Besar Abdul Hadi Awang said last night that Umno must prove that it truly wants unity by restoring oil royalty payment to the state government.

He was addressing some 700 people who assembled at the Sultan Ismail Nasaruddin Shah Stadium to listen to his briefing on the suit filed by the state government yesterday against Petronas and the federal government over the oil royalty issue.

In KOTA BAHARU, Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said today he is agreeable to the agenda proposed by Umno for the Umno-PAS meeting.

"The statement (on the agenda) by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is good...", he told reporters after performing Friday prayers at the Kuala Pak Amat Mosque.

Nik Aziz, who is PAS Council of Ulama head, said however Umno should fulfil the conditions set by PAS before the unity talks could be held.

-- BERNAMA

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