

10 FEB 2001
Mahathir-Meeting
UMNO-PAS TALKS ON FEB 19

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 10 (Bernama) -- The Umno supreme council today fixed Feb 19 for the Malay unity talks between Umno and PAS.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the meeting would be attended by six representatives each from the two parties.

Umno's representatives would be decided by its political bureau, he said.

"We agree with PAS' proposal to hold the meeting on Feb 19," he told reporters after chairing the supreme council meeting at the Umno headquarters, here.

On the place and time for the meeting, he said they had yet to be decided.

Dr Mahathir also did not discount the possibility that he might be leading the Umno delegation at the talks.

"We see that PAS will be led by the PAS president, so we also want the same," he said.

When asked whether Umno would accept Parti Keadilan Nasional if it wanted to join the talks as the scope of discussion would also cover national unity and not just Malay Unity, he said: "No."

"It (Keadilan) has said that it is not a Malay party...we want to talk with PAS only. So, anything to do with Malay party has nothing to do with Keadilan.

"It (Keadilan) has to declare: 'We have now changed our minds and we are a Malay party'... OK lah, we'll consider but it's not definite yet (that it can join the Umno-PAS talks)," he said.

When asked about the format for the talks, Dr Mahathir said: "Anything that's related to unity."

To another question, he said the meeting would be more of an open discussion.

He said the supreme council also discussed internal party problems and decided that all problems and complaints by members must be conveyed to the council members who would then present them at the council meetings.

"Umno members can also write to the supreme council members or the headquarters with their complaints and grouses so that Umno can look into them," he said.

Asked whether the decision was made because some Umno members had touched on the party in their speeches at the recent Malay solidarity rally organised by the Malay Action Front, he said it was a general decision.

Asked what would happen if the party members still talked about internal party matters to the press, he said: "It's alright...it's not that they cannot talk. They can tell the press about how strong Umno is and their unity and support for Umno. But if they talk about their dissatisfaction with Umno, especially if they are council members, then should express their views (to the council)."

Asked whether there were council members using their own web sites to express their views on the party, he said he did not know.

-- BERNAMA
NZ NZ JK