

25 JAN 2001  
Mahathir-PAS

UMNO WILL NOT STOP PAS FROM JOINING BN IF OKAYED BY COALITION PARTNERS

JITRA, Jan 25 (Bernama) -- Umno will not stop PAS from joining the Barisan Nasional (BN) if its other partners in the ruling coalition readily accept PAS, the Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"If PAS wants to join BN, it is up to the other BN component parties to decide. Umno will not stand in the way," he told reporters when approached on the matter after attending an AidilFitri reception organised by the Kubang Pasu Umno Youth here today.

Dr Mahathir is Kubang Pasu Umno division chief and Kubang Pasu Member of Parliament.

Asked whether, in the context of the proposed Umno-PAS talks on Malay unity, PAS would disband itself and have its members join Umno, Dr Mahathir said while Umno would accept anyone, he did not think PAS would dissolve itself to join Umno.

"Even all this while, many PAS members have joined Umno. We are open. Nevertheless, I do not think PAS would disband itself to join Umno," Dr Mahathir said.

On the groundwork for the proposed Umno-initiated talks with PAS on Malay unity, the prime minister said preparations were being put in place.

"We are now determining the date and venue. We look forward to having a discourse with them. We want to know their views. For the time being we cannot say much," he added.

-- BERNAMA  
MAN RYN