

# Members of Pas branch defect en masse to Umno

Nst 14 MAY 2002

PASIR PUTEH, Mon. — The Pas Bukit Kecil branch in Permatang Sungkai, near here, was dissolved last night when all its 124 members decided to join Umno.

They said they came to the decision because they were now convinced Umno was the only viable platform.

Its former head Saari Mohamad, 54, said the branch members were attracted by the leadership qualities of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, including his boldness in declaring Malaysia an Islamic State.

“He did it at a time when Islamic countries were under pressure from the West,” he said.

Undivided support for Umno was vital for the development of the *ummah*.

Saari said his hope to see an Islamic State under Pas was fast fading because the party leaders were using Islam for their own political ends and not for the *ummah*.

Speaking at a ceremony to dissolve the branch, he said the former Pas members was sincere about their move to Umno.

“We were neither forced nor promised anything in return,” he said.

He then led the former Pas members in handing over their Umno membership forms to Ke-

lantani Umno chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, who then launched the process to set up an Umno branch for the area.

Also present were State Umno information chief Datuk Ismail Mamat, Pasir Puteh Umno divisional head Kamaruddin Mohd Nor and State Umno Youth chief Rujhan Mohd Salleh.

Mustapa, meanwhile, said at least 2,000 Pas members in the State including grassroots leaders had crossed over to Umno in the last two months.

“There has been an increase in support for Umno among the opposition,” he said.

He said the people of Kelantan had realised that Pas leaders would not keep their word.

“They make a lot of empty promises,” he said, adding that people were beginning to get frustrated with Pas for its inability to take good care of their needs.

Mustapa said this was different from Umno and Barisan Nasional which honoured their promises.

“Kelantan people should look for leaders who are firm, brave and have vision for the State and its people,” he said.

He believed that State Pas leaders were beginning to feel threatened by the mass defection of their members to Umno.