

DAP and PRM support Vatican meeting

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PENANG, Tues. — The DAP today welcomed the proposed meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Pope John Paul II next month.

DAP deputy chairman Karpal Singh said leaders of all religions in the world should interact in the interests of humanity and such interaction should transcend political lines.

Karpal, in a statement, also described Pas' support for the proposed meeting between Dr Mahathir and the head of the Roman Catholic Church as "right".

He said Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat's support over the matter also showed Pas' political maturity and wisdom.

It was reported today that Nik Aziz, in welcoming the meeting, had also hoped the opportunity would be used to clarify various issues on Islam.

Nik Aziz also said there was no prohibition in Islam for Muslim leaders to meet with leaders of other religions since he had also visited Buddhist temples.

In **Kuala Lumpur**, Parti Rakyat Malaysia welcomed the proposed meeting but urged Dr Mahathir to attend to religious matters at home before leaving for the visit.

PRM president Dr Syed Husin Ali said many of the country's religious communities were dissatisfied with the Government.

These concerned issues such as sites of worship and burial.

The Prime Minister, Syed Husin said, needed to show goodwill not only on the international stage, but also at home.

In **Pekan**, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohamed Najib Razak said the meeting between Dr Mahathir and Pope John Paul II would help give Islam a positive image.

"The religion (Islam) is still being associated with violence due to the ongoing problems in Palestine, Afghanistan and the Philippines.

"This gives a negative picture of Islam," he said.

"The meeting could not have come at a better time."

Najib added the meeting between Dr Mahathir, a Muslim leader from an Islamic country, with the head of the Roman Catholic Church was something good as it would give the world the true picture of Islam and its principles.

"This clearly shows that Islam is not against inter-faith dialogues," he said.