

Still keen to help out

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Perdana waiting for feedback from Thai government

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PATTANI: Efforts to broker peace in the predominantly Thai Muslim provinces of southern Thailand needs more time and cohesion before it can bear fruit.

Perdana Peace Global Organisation executive director Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir, who said this, added that his father (former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad) was still keen to help out in the peace process, including moving into the second phase of peace talks preferably in a neutral country.

"The talks can be held anywhere. We are prepared to mediate for both sides (Thai militant groups and Thai military) including in Brunei," Mukhriz said after laying the foundation stone for a RM500,000 mosque named Mesjid Aman in Pasir Jawa, Telubon here.

Present were Thai honorary consul in Langkawi Datuk Shazry Eskay Abdullah and local Thai officials.

Perdana through Dr Mahathir was involved in informal peace talks with recognised Thai militant groups such as the Pattani United Liberation Front (Pulo) since December, last year.

It is believed that the present carnage is being caused by small cell

groups operating independently from formal militant groups such as Pulo and Barisan Revolusi.

Mukhriz believes that the peace process will take a long time but remains optimistic with the attitude of the new Thai military junta government which has shown strong commitment towards resolving the unrest.

Over 1,700 Thais have been killed in the last three years of unrest.

Perdana is waiting for feedback from the present Thai Government over a list of demands made by the militants as a prelude towards formal peace talks to seek an end to the unrest.

He cited three major components, which can pave a way towards lasting peace in the region of 1.9mil population of which 80% were predominantly Muslims with ancestral ties to Malays in Malaysia.

The three components are granting amnesty to aged militants who fled the region in the 1980s, restoring a sense of justice and a fair distribution of development to reach people of all income-levels.

Mukhriz said the Perdana would launch a fund raising campaign in Malaysia to build the mosque.

■ Thai army chief to visit Malaysia

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