

MAHATHIR  
BM

84 (P)  
KOTA KINABALU, FEB. 20 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT THE PARTY WHOSE EXPULSION FROM THE BARISANNASIONAL HE WOULD PROPOSE WOULD BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEFEND ITSELF IF REQUIRED TO DO SO BY THE BARISAN NASIONAL SUPREME COUNCIL.

THE BARISAN NASIONAL SUPREME COUNCIL WOULD MEET IN LABUAN ON APRIL 15, A DAY BEFORE THE ISLAND IS DECLARED A FEDERAL TERRITORY; THE MEETING WILL BE THE FIRST SUCH MEETING TO BE HELD OUTSIDE KUALA LUMPUR.

HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER DECLINED TO DISCLOSE THE NAME OF THE PARTY WHOSE EXPULSION HE WOULD PROPOSE.

HE SAID THERE WAS NO REASON FOR HIM TO ANNOUNCE THE NAME OF THE PARTY TODAY SINCE +I HAVE NOT DISCLOSED THE NAME YESTERDAY+ WHILE OPENING A POLITICAL WORKCAMP AT KENINGAU. -- MORE 1454/SA  
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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO THE BARISAN NASIONAL CHAIRMAN, SAID HE HAD MADE THE STATEMENT WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE UMNO LEADERSHIP.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AT THE KOTA KINABALU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BEFORE RETURNING TO KUALA LUMPUR AFTER A THREE-DAY VISIT, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE DID NOT WISH TO DISCLOSE THE NAME OF THE PARTY AS EVERYTHING WAS +STILL NOT OFFICIAL.+

ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD DENY A LOCAL PRESS REPORT WHICH DESCRIBED USNO AS THE PARTY HE REFERRED TO IN HIS SPEECH, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WOULD NEITHER DENY NOR CONFIRM IT.

ASKED WHETHER THE PARTY HE ALLUDED TO WAS SABAH-BASED, HE REPLIED +LET'S WAIT+ (THE TWO COMPONENT PARTIES FROM SABAH ARE USNO AND PARTI BERJAYA WHICH IS NOW RULING THE STATE).

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT IT WAS UP TO THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL TO BRING THE RESOLUTION TO THE BARISAN NASIONAL SUPREME COUNCIL MEETING WHICH WOULD THEN DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO APPROVE IT. -- MORE 1709/HM  
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HE SAID IT WAS VITAL THAT EVERY BARISAN NASIONAL COMPONENT OBSERVED AND SUPPORTED THE POLICIES BEING IMPLEMENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

+IF ANY COMPONENT PARTY OPPOSES SUCH POLICIES, THEY CAN LEAVE THE BARISAN NASIONAL,+ HE SAID.

IN HIS SPEECH AT KENINGAU, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, AMONG OTHER THINGS, HAD ALLEGED THAT THE PARTY WHOSE EXPULSION HE WOULD PROPOSE HAD +STABBED THE GOVERNMENT IN THE BACK+ BY TRYING TO UNDERMINE THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AND FRUSTRATE EFFORTS TO MAKE LABUAN A FEDERAL TERRITORY.

HE SAID THAT THE LEADERS OF THE PARTY CONCERNED HAD TRIED TO UNDERMINE THE EFFORTS OF THE GOVERNMENT IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ISSUE BY HOLDING DISCUSSIONS WITH CERTAIN GROUPS OPPOSED TO THE GOVERNMENT ON THE ISSUE TO TAKE THE MATTER TO COURT ON THE GROUND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS WRONG IN PRESENTING THE AMENDMENT -- MORE 1725/HM

RECENTLY WHEN THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT LABUAN WOULD BE MADE A FEDERAL TERRITORY, THE PARTY CONCERNED HAD CONDUCTED A SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN AMONG KAMPUNG PEOPLE STATING THAT THEY DID NOT AGREE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION ON THE MATTER.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO URGED SUPPORTERS OF THAT PARTY WHO STILL CHERISHED THE PRINCIPLES OF THE BARISAN NASIONAL TO LEAVE THE PARTY AS +IT IS NO LONGER OF ANY USE.+

MEANWHILE, USNO PARTY LEADERS DECLINED TO COMMENT ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH AS DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DID NOT DISCLOSE THE NAME OF THE PARTY.

ITS SECRETARY-GENERAL, DATUK HAJ IDRUS MASTAKIM, MERELY REPLIED +NO COMMENT+ TO SEVERAL QUESTIONS ASKED BY BERNAMA AT THE USIA BUILDING.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, USNO WOULD ISSUE A STATEMENT AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME AFTER A MEETING TO BE HELD SOON. -- BERNAMA 1805/HM