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A SABAH FORMULA

The three parties may form a coalition govt

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By K. BARADAN

KOTA KINABALU, Mon. — A Sabah Formula has been agreed upon to end the 10 months of political crisis in the State. The agreement could lead to a coalition government and all the three major parties becoming partners in the Barisan Nasional.

Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan will continue to be the Chief Minister and all court actions, including a suit by Usno president Tun Datu Mustapha Harun, would be withdrawn if the coalition was formed, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here today.

The Sabah Formula was agreed in principle by the Datuk Pairin's Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), Usno and Berjaya after Dr Mahathir met their leaders separately at a hotel.

Berjaya is already a Barisan member while PBS and Usno have applied to join the coalition.

Dr Mahathir announced after the meeting that details of the formula would be worked out and the agreement made public in Kuala Lumpur this week.

He added that the formula would put an end to the crisis in Sabah with no one imposing any conditions for a settlement. "We have decided that each party will have equitable rights in Sabah."

"Whether an election is to be held or not depends on how the details of the formula is to be worked out. After the details

have been finalised, possibly all three parties would become members of the Barisan Nasional," he said.

He added that he could not give details of the formula now because each party would have to go back to its members and explain to them the situation and then get back to working out the details.

"They would then make public the formula in Kuala Lumpur this week and agree to it in black and white," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the formula was generally similar to the one worked out by Umno yesterday at its supreme council meeting. "The formula will bring political and economic stability back to Sabah," he told reporters at the airport before leaving for Kuala Lumpur.

Datuk Pairin was with the

Prime Minister during the Press conference.

"I am very happy with the formula," he told reporters.

"Now it is our individual duty to explain it to our side."

Dr Mahathir met Datuk Pairin first at 11.30am. The meeting lasted for three hours and part of the session was attended by Barisan secretary-general Ghafar Baba.

After lunch, the Prime Minister met Tun Mustapha for about 25 minutes followed by Berjaya president Datuk Mohamad Noor Mansor for about an hour.

Dr Mahathir said the formula was not 100 per cent foolproof and not everybody would be happy with it. "Some have to make sacrifices to make it a success."

"It involves co-operation within the party. If there is a coalition then all the court cases have to be

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Mahathir: Formula involves working together

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withdrawn. Nobody is asking for anything (posts) at the moment.

"Basically the formula involves working together and a coalition government would be one approach," he said.

Dr Mahathir also reiterated that there would be no emergency here. "I have already said so and I say it again."

He said police had given an assurance that they could handle the situation with the powers they had now.

Dr Mahathir said he came to Sabah to see for himself the security situation in the light of recent riots, bombings and arson, which have left four people dead and several others injured.

"As a Prime Minister I am concerned over the situation. I also wanted to meet the leaders of the various parties to help resolve the crisis here and in the peninsula."

He said he had a heart-to-heart talk with both Datuk Pairin and Tun Mustapha as well as Datuk Mohamad Noor.

"We were completely open on how to solve the political crisis," he added.

On the involvement of refugees in the riots, he said: "Obviously many of the refugees are involved. Some have work permits and other documents. Those who have nothing will be deported."

Police today also recovered an unexploded bomb at the statue of Tunku Abdul Rahman in Jalan Penampang. There were no other reports of arson or bombings.
