

Dr M says

PBS 'a

thorn in

one's flesh'

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DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, describing Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS)'s presence in the Barisan Nasional (BN) as "a thorn in one's flesh", said Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan seemed to be at times unaware that he is in Malaysia.

"While the PBS was in the BN, we found that he lacked the BN spirit. As a matter of fact, he seemed unaware that he's in Malaysia ... He only talked about Sabah, Sabah, Sabah," the Prime Minister said.

He said even the television commercial on Sabah contained the slogan "Sabah will show the way".

"Therefore, at times we feel difficult to be together with them because they do not seem to consider themselves as Malaysians at all but merely Sabahans ... made all sorts of demand

PARTI Bersatu Sabah (PBS) vice-president Datuk Kasitah Gaddam quit the party yesterday in protest against its withdrawal from Barisan Nasional. Datuk Kasitah, who is Minister for Land and Regional Development, said he resigned from the party because he does not want people to think that he was involved in the PBS decision to withdraw from the BN. The party, he said, did not consult him on the matters although he was one of its founder members.
— Bernama

that were difficult to entertain.

"Now that they have left the BN, we feel a little bit at ease. There're no more people causing us problems," he told reporters after a closed door meeting with BN candidates in the

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state at the Umno building in Kuantan yesterday.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir had earlier, in a meeting with some 500 government staff at the Kuantan Municipal Council (MPK), described the PBS' presence in the BN as "a thorn in one's flesh".

He also said the PBS had all this while caused "the flesh to swell and suppurate" and now that it had pulled out of the BN, the "damaged flesh had ruptured and the BN had overcome the fever".

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir told reporters the BN has now decided to support independent candidates or those from Akar who are contesting against the PBS in the parliamentary election in Sabah.

"None of the independent candidates has approached us as yet but it doesn't matter we'll look for them. Our purpose is to defeat PBS candidates," he said in reply to a question.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on claims by certain quarters that the decision to set up Umno branches in Sabah was made in haste or as a political gimmick.

He said actually a request had been made long time ago to set up Umno in Sabah but it was rejected then.

"We admit under the present circumstances, we have to make a decision fast because we have only a few more days to go. If we are to study it, it will take time. By then the effect, in terms of politics, will be gone," he said.

On the Federal Territory of Labuan, which Datuk Seri Pairin claimed would be returned to Sabah, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the PBS president could say as he liked to the Sabahans in his attempt to gain their votes.

Asked what effect the PBS withdrawal will have on the BN, he said the BN can win the election and it only needs 120 parliamentary seats to obtain a two-thirds majority in the Dewan Rakyat.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba described Datuk Seri Pairin's action in pulling PBS out of BN as "a dirty political tactic".

"The tactic used by Datuk Seri Pairin is worse than the dirty politics that we used to hear so far," he said, adding that it is not the action of a gentleman.

Launching the Kota Women's Corps at Desa Pandan in Kuala Lumpur, Encik Ghafar said the PBS should have made the move before nomination day for the general election instead of after.

"He pretended to be our friend ... and defected later ... this is most ungentlemanly," he added.

He said the PBS action cost the BN 14 parliamentary seats "but we hope to return to Sabah next time to face the PBS".

Encik Ghafar said Umno decided to spread its wings to Sabah because of the PBS action. Umno had no such intentions before, he added.

He said Datuk Seri Pairin took the opportunity from the election cam-

paign to pressure the BN to meet unreasonable demands, many of which could not be decided by the Prime Minister alone without Cabinet approval or going through the process of Parliament.

The BN will work hard to secure a two-thirds majority in the general election, he added.

He said Datuk Seri Pairin might have been disappointed as he expected more parties in Sarawak to follow suit.

Encik Ghafar said Datuk Seri Pairin's leadership is in fact in conflict with BN's concept of cooperation through consultation.

The PBS refused to accept Usno as a partner in Sabah despite the fact that Usno is a BN component party, he said, adding that the Prime Minister and he himself had requested the PBS to accommodate Usno.

"Our requests were rejected outright by Datuk Seri Pairin, who is determined to destroy Usno altogether," he said. This, he added, was unhealthy politics.

The Deputy Prime Minister also hit out at the Semangat 46 candidate for Titiwangsa, Datuk Harun Idris, who, he said is ungrateful to the Prime Minister who helped obtain his release from jail.

He said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also helped Datuk Harun on his release by arranging for him to receive arrears of pension and salary as chairman of Kewangan Usaha Bersatu Bhd (KUBB). — Bernama