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Mahathir-Sabah

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- Barisan Nasional (BN) generally agrees to the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) proposal to form a coalition government with Usno but the union must be within the context of BN policies, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said: +Generally, we (BN) agree that there be cooperation between Usno and PBS.

+But Usno is part of BN. As such, any plan for cooperation must be within the context of BN policies.+

He was speaking to reporters after opening the World Bank Development Strategy Symposium here.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said PBS President Datuk Joseph Pairin Kilingan and several senior leaders of the party met him on Saturday to convey their intention to set up a coalition government with Usno in Sabah.

During the meeting, he conveyed to them the BN stand and also pointed out problems relating to the matter, he added. -- more

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said: +They (PBS) mentioned about intention of setting up a coalition government and I outlined BN's stand regarding all forms of cooperation.+

He also explained to them that any cooperation between PBS and Usno would not be similar to that of the BN3 government of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) and Sarawak National Party (SNAP) with Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) in Sarawak.

He said: +I explained to them Usno's position as a BN member and the dissimilarity in the form of cooperation between PBS and Usno with that in Sarawak and other places in Malaysia.+

PBDS, a BN member at the federal level, is the opposition at state level in Sarawak.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the PBS intention needed to be discussed first. This was the first time cooperation between a party which opposed BN and a party which is a member of BN, was being suggested. -- more

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A newspaper report today quoted Usno Vice-President Datu Amir Kahar Tun Mustapha as saying that the party was prepared to discuss the possibility of setting up a coalition government with PBS in Sabah.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the PBS leaders did not mention any intention to rejoin BN.

He added: +But, in the discussions, the question which cropped up was whether cooperation outside BN was possible or whether there was a need (for PBS) to join BN.+

Asked whether PBS indicated interest to rejoin the BN, he said: +They did not dismiss the possibility nor was the matter mentioned. But there is no such suggestion.+

According to the Prime Minister, one aspect which required attention pertained to the position of Usno leaders and members who were interested to join Umno.

+The situation in Usno in Sabah has changed. The proposed cooperation with Usno may change to cooperation with Umno,+ he said. -- Bernama

♥04/02/15-28MST