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Mahathir-Sabah (Requested repetition)

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KOTA KINABALU, Feb 21, (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government was aware of a plot by the ruling Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) to secede Sabah from Malaysia and set up an independent state.

He said the government was also aware that Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan, younger brother of the Sabah chief minister, had ambitions of becoming president of Sabah.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir made the disclosure in his speech opening the 23rd general assembly of Usno and launching Umno's entry to Sabah, at Dewan Perdana, Wisma MUIS, here.

He also told a news conference afterwards that the government knew of PBS' link with a country to realise its objective. He did not name the country.

The prime minister said Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan, with the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), Sabah, was working towards the objective by raising the +20-point issue+ and accusing the federal government of neglecting Sabah. The +20-point issue+ is associated with the conditions relating to the rights of Sabah when it joined Malaysia.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the problem had been resolved during Usno rule but was intentionally brought up again by the PBS. -- more

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Mahathir-Sabah 2 Kota Kinabalu (Requested repetition)

He said that since the PBS came to power in 1985, it had poisoned the minds of the people and driven them to hate Malaysia.

+The people Sabah never had hatred for the federal government and people in the peninsula, but now even the Muslims have been influenced,+ he added.

The prime minister said the government had no evidence that the people of the state wanted to revolt or launch a revolution against Malaysia.

+We will act if there is clear evidence of this,+ he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir questioned the sincerity of PBS in wanting to form a coalition government with Usno in the state, and said the matter was raised because PBS felt that Umno's coming to Sabah would threaten the position and interests of its leaders.

He said: +We can cooperate with PBS, it is not that we cannot, but we must also benefit from it and we must also know of the conditions.+

He said that if the PBS wanted to cooperate, its leaders must be sincere and uphold Malaysia, not work towards separating Sabah from Malaysia. -- more

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Mahathir-Sabah 3 Kota Kinabalu (Requested repetition)

Replying to questions from reporters, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said there had been no further discussions thus far with PBS on the proposed cooperation.

He also denied that the federal government had put pressure on the PBS for having withdrawn from the Barisan Nasional.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the prosecution of Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan for corruption had no connection with politics. The law did not spare anybody, he said.

On Umno, he said there was no suggestion for the party to spread its wings to Sarawak after having come to Sabah.

He also said that Umno had never intended to come to Sabah but developments of late had necessitated this.

The prime minister said explanations and briefings would be given to the people of Sabah to enable them understand and appreciate the workings of Umno. -- Bernama