

Dr M to decide on Moggie's status after meeting Taib

KUALA LUMPUR: The position of Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) president Datuk Leo Moggie in the Federal Government will be reviewed only after discussions with Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud and other Barisan Nasional leaders in the state.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday there was a need to know the actual situation before a decision could be made.

Datuk Moggie is the Works Minister. His party is a member of the Barisan at national level but in the opposition in Sarawak.

Dr Mahathir told reporters at the Subang airport on his return from a two-week visit to Mexico and New York that the seven seats won by the PBDS in the state elections were expected.

"But it is not possible for them (PBDS) to set up a government as they do not have the people's support," he said.

On whether the Barisan would accept the PBDS in the state coalition, Dr Mahathir said it was possible.

"We have even received those who had opposed us. Those we do not want, we don't accept," he said.

He also said that there was a need to eliminate

the differences between the national and state level coalition.

"Such differences can create uneasiness among the leaders at the national level," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was happy and proud of the Barisan's achievements in capturing 49 out of the 56 seats in the state assembly.

"Now, the Sarawak Government can concentrate on developing the state in line with the development politics practised there," he said.

Umno secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said the 49 seats won by the Barisan was unexpected as it had expected to win only 42.

He added that the coalition's victory made it clear that the logging issue could not be exploited by the opposition.

"It is clear now, the environmentalists can shut up and stop talking about it," he said.

MCA deputy president Datuk Lee Kim Sai said the victory showed that the Barisan's concept of multi-racial parties working together was supported by the people.

MCA secretary-general Dr Ting Chew Peh said the Barisan's success would enable more people in Sarawak to enjoy the fruits of development.