

Barisan Nasional to support any move for reconciliation

It's up to the Sarawak BN

By Abdul Razak Chik

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Barisan Nasional will support any move taken to mend relations between the Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) and the Sarawak BN, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The BN would take the necessary steps to bring about a reconciliation but it was up to the Sarawak BN to make the final move, the Prime Minister added.

"What is needed now is that both sides show their sincerity in wanting to bring about such a reconciliation," said Dr Mahathir.

But, Dr Mahathir, who is the BN chairman, said it would be largely up to "our partners in Sarawak to pave the way for a reconciliation."

"We in the BN have always accepted the PBDS as a component member at federal level," he told reporters at Subang International Airport after sending off Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko at the end of their four-day royal visit. Several Sarawak BN leaders have reacted coolly to the offer of PBDS president Datuk Leo Moggie to apologise to Chief Minister Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud in order to bring about a reconciliation between the party and the State BN.

For instance, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Alfred Jabu, who is also Par-

ti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) deputy president, has stated that Datuk Moggie should go to all the longhouses in the State and meet the people to apologise for his past actions.

He also wanted Datuk Moggie to retract allegations made against the State BN.

Asked if such demands were unreasonable, Dr Mahathir said it was something which could be discussed by all parties concerned.

Dr Mahathir said it was understandable that most Sarawak BN leaders were hardly enthusiastic in their reaction to Datuk Moggie's offer of apology made through the Press on Monday.

"They were the ones directly involved in the affair. They will surely have a slightly different view on the subject compared to those who were not directly affected," he said.

Dr Mahathir said everyone should view the situation in its proper light, adding that he was confident that the present reaction from the State BN was a temporary phenomenon.

Asked whether Datuk Moggie should apologise to all Sarawakians as the next step towards reconciliation, Dr Mahathir said his gesture in the Press should be taken into account.

"I feel that whatever Datuk Moggie said then reflected the stand of the PBDS as a party and should be taken into consideration," he said.