

▼17/09/12-25MST

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MAHATHIR SAYS PAIRIN'S SUCCESSOR MUST HAVE MALAYSIAN OUTLOOK

Mahathir-Pairin

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TAWAU, Sept 17 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today relations between Sabah and the Federal government could be improved if there was another leader who possessed a Malaysian outlook to take Chief Minister Datuk Pairin Kitingan's place.

The Prime Minister said: +That is possible. But, if somebody else replaces Pairin, he must have a very Malaysian outlook, not the kind of narrow outlook that is propagated by Pairin.+

Asked if he had anybody in mind who could replace Pairin, he replied: +I don't know. It is up to the people of Sabah to decide.+

Dr Mahathir, who was speaking to reporters at the Tawau airport before returning to Kuala Lumpur, was asked if state-federal government relations could improve if there was another leader to head the ruling Parti Bersatu Sabah. He attended a Barisan Nasional youth rally here last night.

Relations between the state and federal government deteriorated following Pairin's action in taking PBS out of Barisan Nasional days before the 1990 general election -- an action that Dr Mahathir has described as a stab in the back. -- more

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Mahathir-Pairin 2 Tawau

Dr Mahathir also said that although certain quarters in the state were aware that Sabah could not likely be taken out of the Malaysian federation, they were trying to isolate Sabah from other states.

Their action was motivated by the hope that they would be +kings of a small pond+, he added.

He said the Sabah state government, led by PBS, purposely spread propaganda among the people to arouse anti-peninsular and even anti-Sarawak sentiments.

Dr Mahathir described his reception at the mammoth rally here last night as overwhelming and it exhibited the people's high spirits and hopes for Barisan Nasional.

He was confident that Tawau in particular wanted to support Barisan Nasional because the people realised BN's aspiration to develop Sabah.

Commenting on Pairin's explanation that the re-introduction of the rule requiring non-Sabahans to produce passports when entering the state was a security measure, he said security was a federal matter. -- more

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Mahathir-Pairin 3 Tawau

He said the state government had no say as it did not handle police and military matters.

He added: +The issue of security is the responsibility of the federal government because we possess all the instruments... all the personnel to look after security in Sabah.

+It looks like he purposely wants to raise the sentiment that Sabah is for the people of Sabah only.+

Dr Mahathir also said the authorities in Kuala Lumpur had not received any application for the formation of a new political party in Sabah.

+I do not know about it. We have not received any application. Maybe, the newspapers are better informed about it,+ he added

A local daily reported yesterday that a new party called Parti Kemajuan Rakyat (PKR) would be launched in Tawau with its pro tem committee made up of former members of PBS and Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat (Akar), a BN component. -- more

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Mahathir-Pairin 4 (last) Tawau

On the question of a successor to Tan Sri Elyas Omar whose resignation as Kuala Lumpur Datuk Bandar took effect today, Dr Mahathir said he had not received any list of nominees from Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhammad Taib as reported.

He added, however, that there was no condition that required the Datuk Bandar to be a person from Selangor.

He said the appointment of a person from Selangor as Datuk Bandar was not a condition. If there was a candidate than it could be done but if not, someone who was not from Selangor would be appointed.

As to the speculation that Internaal Revenue Department Director-General Tan Sri Abu Bakar Mohd Noor was to be appointed the new Datuk Bandar, Dr Mahathir jokingly replied: +Maybe he can collect more tax.+

Present to see Dr Mahathir and Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali off at the airport were the Sabah Umno deputy liaison chief Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun and Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

-- Bernama