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Mahathir-PBS

BN WANTS PBS ASSURANCE BEFORE IT CAN BE READMITTED, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct. 26<sup>93</sup> (Bernama) -- Barisan Nasional (BN) must get an assurance from Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) that it has changed before it can be re-admitted into the coalition, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said it was not the first time that PBS had expressed its intention to rejoin BN since pulling out of the coalition just days before the 1990 general election.

"While we welcome their intention, we certainly wish to know what conditions to attach," he told reporters at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Subang on his return from Cyprus after attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said parties wishing to join BN must uphold BN principles.

"We cannot have a situation where parties can join and leave BN just like that... otherwise BN has no meaning," he added. -- more

AZZ LDB

▼26/10/09-45MST

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Mahathir-PBS 2 Kuala Lumpur

"What is the guarantee that PBS would not do what happened before?" he asked in response to questions about statements by the PBS leadership on the party's intention to rejoin BN.

PBS vice president Datuk Lajim Haji Okin, who is also Assistant Minister to the Chief Minister, said yesterday PBS was waiting for the appropriate time to apply to rejoin BN.

Last Friday, Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan, who is PBS president, said he placed hopes in Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, as UMNO Deputy President, to improve relations which had been strained between Kota Kinabalu and Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir said statements by PBS leaders linking changes in the UMNO leadership with the opposition party's intention to rejoin BN were mere excuses.

He added: "We have other reasons why they left BN... it was not because of change of leadership but due to the PBS attitude, (so) what guarantee is there they have changed. -- more

AZZ LDB

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Mahathir-PBS 3 Kuala Lumpur

"If they question the UMNO leadership, perhaps, UMNO too question their leadership."

Asked whether he meant that BB would accept PBS if it was not led by Pating, Dr Mahathir said: "Maybe, we want to know what is his guarantee."

Dr Mahathir mentioned the PBS action in pulling out of BN and the impact it had during the last general election when reporters asked for elaboration.

He said: "Previously, in the midst of the general election, they withdrew and thus prevented us from contesting in many areas because we were unable to field candidates since the campaign process had begun.

"We want to know whether this time there is a change and what guarantee that the change would be lasting.

"Let it not happen when we have elections again, they pull out... there will be problems." -- MORE

AZZ LDB

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Mahathir-PBS 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Asked if unity could be improved with PBS' return to the BN fold, Dr Mahathir said there must be a reason for the strained relations.

"If we say people's unity can be strengthened it means the obstacle to unity is PBS," he said, noting the close relations between the Federal and state governments before PBS ruled Sabah.

He added: "So much so, at that time I visited Sabah five times in a year and each time I stayed for five days... I saw the development and knew all the leaders in Sabah.

"This time, in the last few years since PBS took over, even when I visited Sabah, I stayed in one place, as if I was separated from the people of Sabah."

This resulted in the absence of friendliness and it was possibly done deliberately, he said. -- Bernama

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