

▼01/02/15-06MST

CNS6539

R PE 01-02 00210 EA870

aae tbe

Mahathir-Jeffrey

JEFFREY ACCEPTABLE IF HE SUBSCRIBES TO BN PRINCIPLES, SAYS MAHATHIR

bm

KOTA KINABALU, Feb. 1 (Bernama) -- Barisan Nasional (BN) can accept the leadership of former Internal Security Act detainee Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan if he subscribes to the principles of the BN struggle, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"It is not the question of personality, its the question of his stand," he told a press conference here at the end of his two-day visit to Sabah.

If Dr Jeffrey wanted to mend relations between Kuala Lumpur and Sabah, he must subscribe to the BN principles, he replied when reporters asked him whether BN could accept Dr Jeffrey, whose brother is Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan.

Dr Mahathir said he was keen to know Dr Jeffrey's stand now, following his release from detention under the ISA.

Dr Jeffrey, Director of the Sabah Foundation, was detained under the ISA on May 13, 1991 for alleged involvement in a plot to take Sabah out of Malaysia. Given a conditional release on Dec. 22, last year, he was placed under restricted residence in Seremban before being freed on Jan. 20. -- more

/MOK LDB

▼01/02/16-26MST

CNS6543

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Mahathir-Jeffrey 2 Kota Kinabalu

Dr Mahathir said he met Dr Jeffrey a long time before Pairin announced dissolution of the Sabah State Legislative Assembly on Jan. 10.

He did not meet Dr Jeffrey while the latter was under detention because government policy did not permit it.

He said: "I know him before... quite a long time and we had no quarrel. In fact, I think I helped him a little bit also. So, I want to know what he has become.

"I had a chat with him, that's all. After that he is on his own.

"What he does is his business. If he loves Sabah as he says he will make the right decision. But, if they all think about family or other things, possibly his decision would not be a good one."

Dr Mahathir said Dr Jeffrey should at least have a better understanding of the Federal government stand on Sabah and the question of Malaysia.

He added: "He understand more (now). Whether he agrees or not is another question. I'm not asking him whether he agrees or not... only that he must understand what we are doing.

"Before, he saw the Federal government from afar and considered it wrong. But now he has got a closer view." -- more

/MOK LDB

▼01/02/16-29MST

CNS6557

R PE 01-02 00204 EA872

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Mahathir-Jeffrey 3 Kota Kinabalu

Dr Mahathir also said the chances of Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) being accepted back into the BN fold would be better if there was a change in its leadership.

He added: "It would be more likely. I have no quarrel with the Kadazans or people of Sabah. The problem is their leadership.

"The present leader is a person who is unqualified to be a leader... a person who has been found guilty of corruption."

Asked if BN's doors were closed to PBS, he said BN had never closed its doors to PBS but it was difficult to take it back.

On Pairin's position, Dr Mahathir said the Chief Minister should seek forgiveness from the people of Sabah and quit politics after being found guilty of corruption by the High Court.

"It is not a question whether he can be Chief Minister or not but he cannot lead. He should by right ask for forgiveness from the people of Sabah and quit politics regardless of the court decision.

"This is not politics... it is the question of a common crime." -- more  
/MOK LDB

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CNS6562

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Mahathir-Jeffrey 4 (last) Kota Kinabalu

Asked whether Sabah Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Bernard Dompok met him, Dr Mahathir said the latter did not but he (Mahathir) learned many Kadazans wanted to leave PBS.

Dr Mahathir declined to comment on speculation that former Minister of Sabah Affairs Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun would contest in Sulabayan against Sabah UMNO liaison chief Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai.

He said he respected Mustapha for his service to Sabah where the people also held him in high esteem but there was the possibility of efforts to manipulate him.

Nevertheless, he added, it was up to Mustapha to decide whether to contest or not. -- Bernama

/MOK LDB

▼01/02/16-55MST