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Mahathir-Sabah

PBS CANDIDATES WANT TO JOIN BN BUT PREVENTED FROM DOING SO, SAYS DR M
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he had been informed that several victorious Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) candidates in the state election wanted to join the Barisan Nasional (BN) but were being prevented from doing so.

He said he was told by BN leaders in Sabah that they had got the "message" from several of these candidates.

This situation had also made the Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Haji Mohamad Said Kernak unable to determine who should take the oath as chief minister, he told a news conference at his residence, Seri Perdana, here. -- more

JO MGN

▼20/02/13-14MST

CNS5719
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Mahathir-Sabah 2 Kuala Lumpur.

This was because the Yang Dipertua Negeri was unable to determine who enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the elected representatives, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that even before polling there had been talk that some PBS candidates might withdraw from the PBS.

"I do not know whether this is true but they (PBS victorious candidates) should be given the liberty (to decide). Instead, the information we get is that they are being detained and not allowed to come out.

"Perhaps, it is the right of the (PBS) party to do so but we have received complaints about this. We want to know whether it is true or otherwise," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also BN chairman, said there was no other easy way to determine the stand of the PBS victorious candidates other than to allow them to make statements regarding their position. -- more

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CNS5726
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Mahathir-Sabah 3 Kuala Lumpur

The prime minister said the problem cropped up because the Sabah constitution differed from the constitutions of the other states in that the party which forms the government is allowed to appoint six more assemblymen.

"This will definitely result in a distortion because it does not truly conform to the need of one-man one-vote and the victorious party gets more than the support given to it.

"Therefore, if anyone wished to leave the party after the formation of the government, the effect of the withdrawal will not be the same as that prior to the formation of the government," he said.

He said he hoped that the victorious candidates, whether they were from the PBS or BN, be allowed to state their stand to determine which party they supported. -- more

▼20/02/13-44MST

CNS5754

U PE 20-02 00147 EA655

aac tbe

Mahathir-Sabah 4 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said the problem would not have come up if a party had won with a big majority but the situation was different now.

Asked about the detention of the victorious candidates, he said: "If they had voluntarily allowed themselves to be detained, that is their problem.

"But if anyone reports that he has been kept against his will, perhaps the police will have to act to free whoever had been kidnapped."

Giving the assurance that the BN would not take any unlawful action, Dr Mahathir said he hoped that the matter would be resolved according to law without any untoward incident.

"I hope this will calm the situation. If the people of Sabah have elected the PBS, we accept it," he said. -- more

JO MGN

▼20/02/14-35MST

CNS5757

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aac tbe

Mahathir-Sabah 5 Kuala Lumpur

Therefore, he said, the Yang Dipertua Negeri had to make a decision as soon as possible.

However, he said, the possibility of PBS victorious candidates wanting to cross over to the BN will totally alter the outcome of the state election.

Asked what Pairin should do to enable him to be sworn in as the chief minister and form the state government, Dr Mahathir said he would convince the Yang Dipertua Negeri that he enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the elected representatives.

Asked about the possibility of a coalition government in Sabah, he said the matter did not arise.

However, the BN would accept any victorious candidate from the PBS who wanted to cross over but the BN would not coax anyone to do so.

Asked about the provision in the state constitution which allowed the victorious party to appoint six assemblymen, he said there should not be such a provision because it changed the form of democracy. -- more

JO MGN

▼20/02/14-45MST

CNS5767

U PE 20-02 00134 EA657

aac tbe

Mahathir-Sabah 6 Kuala Lumpur

But, he said, if the BN were to form the government, the coalition would have to abide by the provision though it should rightly be amended.

Asked whether the Yang Dipertua Negeri could invite the BN to form the government and appoint the six assemblymen after that, Dr Mahathir said he could not do that.

On the BN role should PBS form the government, he said the BN would scrutinise the actions of the PBS to ensure there was no longer abuse of power and allocations.

He also said that the BN would only implement the projects it had promised during the election campaign in all constituencies which elected the coalition's candidates. -- more

JO MGN

CNS5768

U PE 20-02 00131 EA658

aae tbe

Mahathir-Sabah 7 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said the pledges included the setting up of a university in Sabah should the BN win the election.

"We promised that (the university) if we win but we lost, that means the Sabah people decided they won't have a university because automatically when you reject BN, you reject the university.

"They are saying that even if we don't get the university we don't mind. To them PBS is more important. That is their decision," he said.

Dr Mahathir dismissed a PBS allegation that the BN sent thousands of phantom voters to Sabah.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was present at the news conference. -- Bernama