

Next Government will be sworn in at 10am today,

# PM: No coalition with

says Yang di-Pertua

# PBS

By  
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KOTA KINABALU, Sun. — As the new Sabah Government is being formed and waiting to be sworn in, the Prime Minister rejected the possibility of a coalition between Barisan Nasional and the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS).

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement came amidst speculation that PBS leader Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan was willing to coalesce his party's 25 seats with the BN's 23 in a coalition Government.

Pairin, who was outside the Yang di-Pertua Negeri's Istana gates seeking admission since 9.30 last night, continued to wait even after the Yang di-Pertua Negeri issued a statement that he would swear in the next Government at 10am tomorrow.

At a Press conference at his residence, Seri Perdana, in Kuala Lumpur this morning, Dr Mahathir said the BN was not entering into a coalition with the PBS to form the next State Government — even if Pairin stepped down as party leader.

"However, those Assemblymen elected on PBS tickets can apply to join the Barisan Nasional component parties as individuals," said the BN chairman.

He said there were mes-

sages that some PBS State Assemblymen wanted to join the BN but they were not given the freedom to do so.

Commenting on why the new State Government had yet to be sworn in, Dr Mahathir said he was informed that the Yang di-Pertua Negeri was indisposed.

"We have also been informed that the PBS Assemblymen are being confined and are not allowed to do what they want.

"If these Assemblymen report the matter to the police and state that they are be-

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ing confined against their will, action can be taken. Otherwise, we cannot act."

Dr Mahathir said the PBS Assemblymen should be brought out of their confinement and be asked to openly state whether they wanted to remain as PBS members or join any other party.

He said in order for the Yang di-Pertua Negeri to swear in a Chief Minister, there must be evidence that the person enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the Assemblymen.

Dr Mahathir said he congratulated the people of Sabah for ensuring that the elections were carried out smoothly without any untoward incidents.

He said the people had made their decision and had determined their future by

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# Strategy of whipping up anti-federal feelings failed to work this time

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Pairin, had campaigned for his sons and the PBS but failed to hold back the Barisan juggernaut in the Malay/Muslim Bumiputera majority areas.

In the past it had been Usno that had denied the PBS complete control of the 24 constituencies. But with the Barisan as the contender, Mustapha's siding with the PBS did not help the failing fortunes of the ruling party.

Beside Amirkahar's Banggi, the other Malay/Muslim Bumiputera seats snatched from the jaws of the Barisan are Kuala Penyu, Klias and Tandek.

Of the 20 won by the Barisan in these areas, Umno took 18, Akar one and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) one.

It is thus unlikely the names of Usno and Mustapha will be evoked in the future to aid the cause of anyone or any party.

It is unlikely that Sabah politics will ever be the same again with a strong Umno contending for power in the State. The party is truly national now. It won 18 of the 31 seats it contested in its first outing in the State.

It is also a signal that the PBS is on its way out. It is already in a precarious position with only a two-seat majority compared to the 41 seats it commanded (36 from PBS and five former Usno leaders) when the State As-

sembly was dissolved on Jan. 10.

When Pairin dissolved the State Assembly one week before the High Court verdict on his corruption trial, sentiments were high that the party would romp home an easy victor since it could bank on sympathy votes for Pairin.

During the campaign trail, anti-federal sentiments were the main highlight, with Pairin being portrayed as "victim of circumstances" to garner sympathy votes and the "Sabah for Sabahans" slogan seemed most appropriate for the party to return to power.

What went wrong for the PBS? The formula — whip up anti-federal feelings and the party's own failings and faults would be forgotten — had worked for the party in the past.

But little did the PBS expect this strategy to be less convincing now that the Barisan had demonstrated that it could deliver. The people saw nothing wrong with yearning for development and better living standards.

Having "persevered" through three terms with the PBS, the winds of change were already blowing throughout the State and the people's desire for change was best reflected by the results when the Barisan came two seats short of forming the next State Government.

The Barisan Nasional, led

by Umno, made a valiant charge to win the hearts of the people of Sabah with countless meet-the-people sessions all over the State during the final lap of the campaigning.

With its coalition partners Akar (bidding for seven seats), Sabah Progressive Party (seven) and LDP (three), Umno spearheaded a campaign aimed at enlightening the people on the benefits of voting in a Barisan Government.

The Barisan's "Blueprint for a New Sabah" manifesto is comprehensive and development-oriented with concrete proposals to put Sabah on par with other States compared with the PBS manifesto which stressed on "protecting the rights and sensitivities of Sabahans".

Since it came to power in 1985, the PBS had succeeded in swaying the people away from the real issues — the lack of infrastructure development, increased unemployment and little progress, with election campaigns centred around anti-federal sentiments. This election was no different with added focus on Pairin's supposed "technical conviction" for corruption.

PBS victories at the elections were largely with much reduced majorities except for some of the popular candidates who won by bigger margins.

The PBS won all the 15 Kadazan majority seats, four Chinese majority ar-

reas, four Malay/Muslim Bumiputera areas and two mixed areas to secure its 25 seats while the Barisan won 20 Malay/Muslim Bumiputera areas and three Chinese majority areas to gain 23 seats.

In the 15 Kadazan-dominated areas, the PBS won with reduced majorities in 11 and increased majorities in only four. In the two mixed areas of Inanam and Tenom, the party registered reduced majorities.

Of the four Chinese majority seats it won, the PBS scraped through with narrow margins in Karamunting (113 votes), Sembulan (298 votes) and Sri Tanjung (929 votes) while its victory

at Sembulan was with a 4,294 vote majority although in the 1990 election the margin was 8,537.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Ariaah Tengku Ahmad, who is also PBS Wanita leader was also voted out together with several Assistant Ministers.

Umno which entered Sabah in February 1991 seems to have gained much ground during this short period. Before the dissolution of the State Assembly, the party had seven ex-Usno State Assemblymen in its fold and it managed to make a bigger inroad in the various constituencies.

Former Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee

who broke away from the PBS to form the Sabah Progressive Party managed to give a good account of himself, with his party winning three of the seven seats it was allocated.

Akar, which contested in seven areas, won one when deputy party president Pendikar Amin Mulia won the Tempasuk seat although party president Datuk Mark Koding failed to win in Ranau.

The LDP which contested three seats under the Barisan banner won only Kudat.

The PBS is clearly losing its support throughout the State. In this elections, Pairin's party polled 49.48 per cent of the total votes com-

pared with 53.92 per cent in 1990.

It is obvious from the support for the Barisan that most people no longer subscribe to the anti-federal sentiments espoused by the PBS. The issue that the Barisan planned to "colonise" the State has been rejected by most people who want to enjoy better infrastructure, development, progress and better living standards like their counterparts in other States.

The Barisan's good showing also indicates that the people prefer closer ties between the State and Federal Governments compared to the confrontational stand of the PBS.