

Hope yet for splinter parties, says Dr M

ALOR STAR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says there is still hope for Parti Demokratik Sabah (PDS) and Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS) to be admitted into the Barisan Nasional despite the objection by another Sabah-based party.

He said the criteria for BN admission was set on a consensus basis but "normally all parties abide by the majority decision."

"If we stick to the rules, a party cannot gain entry if there is an objection.

"But if only one party opposes and all the others agree, the (objecting) party will agree too," he told newsmen on arrival at the Sultan Abdul Halim airport here yesterday to celebrate Hari Raya Aidiladha.

The Prime Minister was asked to comment on the decision by Angkatan Keadilan Ra-

kyat (Akar) on Thursday to oppose the admission of PDS and PBRS into the BN fold.

Akar has also requested for the vacant deputy chief minister's post in the Sabah Cabinet which is reserved for a leader from the splinter non-Muslim parties.

The PDS is headed by former Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Bernard Dompok while the PBRS is led by former state Fi-

nance Minister Datuk Joseph Kurup.

Dr Mahathir had earlier given the splinter parties until May 31 to reorganise themselves before a decision is made on their application to join the BN.

He said it would be ideal if the splinter parties could merge and accept one leader "otherwise they must accept the reality."