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Anwar-PAS

UMNO'S RESPONSE TO COALITION ONLY AFTER DISCUSSING IT, SAYS ANWAR

KOTA KINABALU, Nov 17 (Bernama) -- Umno Deputy President Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today Umno would give proper response to the idea of a coalition government in Kelantan only after discussing it.

The matter would be discussed as soon as possible, he told reporters after opening the Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) Convention here.

Asked when would this be, Anwar said, "The Prime Minister will be returning this evening (from overseas trip)."

He was asked to comment on yesterday's statement by Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat that PAS was willing to form a state coalition government with Umno.

Nik Aziz's statement came a day after Kelantan Umno Liaison deputy chief Datuk Annuar Musa suggested that PAS could forward the idea of a coalition government with Umno to Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who is also Kelantan Umno Chief.

Asked whether he was surprised with the willingness expressed by PAS on the idea, Anwar said, "I'm not surprised."

He also denied that the Sabah BN would be holding the state election early next year.

"This is the first time that I am hearing about it," he said.

The opposition Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) had been alerting its supporters on the possibility of the state election early next year.

"Early next year, not possible ... it's fasting month," Anwar said.

The Sabah BN government's five-year term only expires in 1999.

-- BERNAMA

JS ABG