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Koding-Quit

MARK KODING QUILTS AS AKAR BERSATU PRESIDENT

KOTA KINABALU, Nov 7 (Bernama) -- Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat Bersatu (Akar Bersatu) founding president Datuk Mark Koding today announced his resignation as president and the appointment of his deputy Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia as acting president.

He made the announcement at a news conference after the party's supreme council meeting. Pandikar was also present.

He will nevertheless remain as a party member.

He said he was resigning to concentrate on pursuing his degree in theology in Australia up to masters level.

"In October 1995, I have expressed my desire to resign as president but was asked to hold on due to the so-called leadership crisis in Akar Bersatu. I can step down now as the party had stabilised," he said.

He was referring to the clash between Pandikar and Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan, who was also the party's deputy president, on who should be appointed the president's representative in his absence.

Asked whether he had discussed his decision with the state and federal Barisan Nasional (BN) leadership, Koding said there was no need to do so as he had conveyed his decision to Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad when he met him to discuss the matter in October 1995 .

He said he had asked Pandikar to convey his decision to Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee, who is also state BN chairman.

Koding said the supreme council meeting today decided that he be made the honorary president but he declined as it would not be appropriate for him to hold any party posts since he would be out of the country.

Asked whether he was retiring from politics, he said: "I'm retiring to take a rest. See how the situation in future."

The support base of Akar Bersatu are essentially from the Kadazandusun community but none of its Kadazandusun candidates won in the last State Election.

Pandikar, an Iranun community leader from Kota Belud, was the only candidate to be elected to the Tempasuk state seat.

The party has three assemblymen now. They are Datuk Markus Majihi, who is Assistant Social Services Minister, Datuk Kadoh Agundong, and Pandikar, who is also Agriculture and Fisheries Minister.

Koding said Pandikar's position as acting president will be endorsed at an extraordinary general meeting to be convened soon.

"I have appealed to members of the supreme council to give their full support and cooperation to Pandikar," he said.

When asked for his reaction, Pandikar said Koding made his decision after consulting him.

" I accept Koding's resignation with a heavy heart," he said, likening his appointment as acting president as yet another test for him. -- BERNAMA

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