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Masing-Report

PBDS PREPARING REPORT ON BUKIT BEGUNAN VOTE-BUYING

KUCHING, Feb 16 (Bernama) -- Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS), whose election victory in the Bukit Begunan state constituency last year has been nullified, is preparing a report for the party's supreme council meeting next week.

Party vice-president Dr James Jemut Masing said today a committee headed by him and comprising mostly lawyers is inquiring into the case.

Copies of the report will be given to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, he told reporters at his residence.

PBDS is one of the four component parties of the Sarawak Barisan Nasional which won the September state election by a landslide.

The High Court on Thursday declared the Bukit Begunan election results null and void after concluding there was general bribery of voters in the election.

In Bukit Begunan, Mong anak Dagang of PBDS polled 4,891 votes to defeat independent candidate Donald Lawan by a majority of 2,165 votes.

The court, however, did not find any evidence of excessive spending by Mong during the election campaign and he is free to contest again.

Masing, who is Sarawak Tourism Minister, also said the High Court judgment was being studied as he claimed the ruling was "confusing".

"Our lawyer will look into this matter to take the necessary action," he said.

In KUALA LUMPUR, DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang today called for tightening of the election laws to disqualify a candidate if there had been excessive expenditure or vote-buying by his agents.

The onus of proof must be placed on the candidate to prove that he had no knowledge or had not consented to such doings, he said in a statement.

"The Election Commission must take immediate steps to ensure that the election laws do not become a mockery, creating a situation where an election is declared null and void because of money politics and vote-buying but the candidate concerned is not disqualified," said Lim. --

BERNAMA

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