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Sabah-Pairin

COMPULSORY FOR PBS CANDIDATES TO SIGN ANTI-HOP AGREEMENT - PAIRIN

KOTA KINABALU, Feb 17 (Bernama) -- The PBS has made it compulsory for its candidates to sign an "anti-hop" agreement to prevent a repeat of the 1994 mass defection of its assemblymen which led to the collapse of the then PBS government.

With the agreement, the candidates not only pledge their allegiance to the party but also to the voters they represented, Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) president Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan said today.

"Those who win and later hop to another party are not only traitors to PBS but also to the voters, and thus, the voters have the right to demand them to vacate their seat to pave the way for a by-election," he told reporters at the party's Chinese New Year open house here today.

This is among the measures taken by PBS to put a stop to party-hopping in this election, said the former Chief Minister.

In the 1994 state election, PBS won 25 of the 48 elected seats, enabling the party to form the state government. However, the PBS government lasted for only 22 days when majority of its assemblymen left the party to join Barisan Nasional (BN) by forming new parties or joining Umno or MCA.

The party is now left with only four seats, with the ruling BN having 43 and one Independent.

Pairin said Sabahans would not keep silent this time if their voted in candidate crossed over to another party.

He reiterated his confidence that PBS would be returned to power in this state election which must be held before March 18.

Pairin said he was basing his confidence on the people's dissatisfaction over the BN's administration particularly on the rotation of the chief minister's post.

He claimed that Sabahans were aware that only certain individuals benefited from the system but not the state and the people at large.

"The people of Sabah waited patiently for five years to reject the system and they will prove it this time," he said.

Pairin said the rotation system would be scrapped if PBS was given the mandate to form the state government in this election.

Commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's three-day visit to Sabah beginning tomorrow, he said: "What I really hope is for the Prime Minister to give an assurance that this election will be a clean one, conducted in accordance with the law and the Federal Constitution."

"We (PBS) do not want to see the people of Sabah and their generation suffer because of politicking," he said.

Speaking at the open house, Pairin called on the people not to be easily taken in by the promises made by the political parties contesting in the polls.

"Don't be like a fish, if you make a mistake by biting the bait, you'll be fried," said Pairin, who spoke in four languages -- Kadazandusun, Chinese, Bahasa Melayu and English.

-- BERNAMA

SJA MAI TS