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Mohamed-Sabah

FAIR ALLOCATION OF SEATS FOR SABAH POLLS, SAYS BN SEC-GEN

JOHOR BAHRU, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- The allocation of seats among the Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties for the Sabah elections will be done in a fair manner, said BN secretary-general Datuk Seri Mohamed Rahmat said today.

"We will be fair in the allocation of seats," he told reporters after attending a closed door meeting between Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Umno Johor Liaison Committee, here.

But, he said Sabah Umno would get the most seats, being the backbone party of the Sabah government, and this would be defended.

"...because many have believed in Umno now. Justice and power-sharing concept brought by Umno have been well accepted by the Sabah of Sabah," he said.

Mohamed, who is also Information Minister, said if Umno got the biggest number of seats, it would enhance voters' confidence in the formation of a just government like that in the Peninsula.

"We are not denying other component parties of their seats. The allocation of seats will be done in a manner, fair and acceptable to all," he said.

Mohamed said Umno would not contest in constituencies where it could not win or where the majority of the voters are non Muslims.

"That we cannot do. But we will also consider giving predominantly Malay constituencies to other component parties in the spirit of friendship within the BN, like in the Peninsula," he said.

As such, he said, to ensure stability in Sabah, Umno's role as the backbone to the state government must be preserved.

Asked when would the BN Supreme Council meet to discuss allocation of seats, Mohamed said this would be decided by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

In the 1994 state election, the BN won 23 seats compared to 25 by the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS). But the BN formed the state government when several PBS assemblymen crossed over, giving the BN seat majority.

--BERNAMA

MKO ABG