

23/02/1999

Osu to meet PM to discuss selection of candidates

KOTA KINABALU, Mon. - State Umno Liaison Committee head Datuk Osu Sukam will meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad soon to discuss the selection of party candidates in the State elections.

"As State Umno Liaison Committee head, I will meet Dr Mahathir who is Umno president to discuss (the issue of) candidates that Umno will be fielding," he told reporters after the dissolution of the State Legislative Assembly today.

Asked how many candidates the party hoped to field, Osu said the matter would be discussed with other Barisan Nasional component parties.

"We do not know the exact number of candidates from Umno contesting the elections. We will discuss the matter with other component members and settle the question of seat allocation soon," he said.

On whether Umno would swap some of its current seats with other components, Osu said the matter was being discussed and that seat allocation would have to be agreed upon by all in the BN spirit.

Currently, Umno has 21 seats in the 48-member State Legislative Assembly while other BN components have 22 seats.

The Parti Bersatu Sabah has four seats while one seat belongs to an Independent candidate.

Meanwhile, State MCA chairman Datuk Chau Tet On said the party wanted to contest three seats.

Chau, who is Api-Api Assemblyman, said he expected to defend his seat.

He said the party proposed to field its deputy chairman Edwin Khoo in Karamunting and party first vice-chairman Charlie Cheng in Sri Tanjung.

(Karamunting is now held by Independent candidate Datuk Lau Pui Kiong while Sri Tanjung is held by Datuk Michael Lim Yun Sang from the Sabah Progressive Party).

Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat (Akar) president Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia said the party was prepared to face the elections.

"We have been prepared for the past year," he said.

On the BN's chances of retaining Tempasuk, Pandikar, who is the incumbent, said the seat could be won if the party continued to remain united.

Pandikar, however, declined comment on seat allocation and the question of candidacy.

State BN secretary Datuk Karim Bujang said the BN was prepared to face the elections.

He said there was close co-operation among the nine BN component parties. He added that the components should concentrate on strengthening the coalition.

State Legislative Assembly Speaker Datuk Hassan Alban Sandukong said the election could be held before the first batch of pilgrims leave the State for Mecca to perform the Haj on March 17.

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