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Pairin: I learnt of MP quitting from the papers

KOTA KINABALU, Thurs. - Parti Bersatu Sabah president Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan said today that he came to know of Penampang MP Paul Nointien's resignation from the party from the newspapers this morning.

"I came to know of the resignation this morning when I read the newspapers. He (Nointien) says he handed over the letter to me which is untrue, because my secretary only saw the letter on her desk this morning and then faxed it to me. However, I wish him the best," he said.

Pairin said the contents of the letter included Nointien's decision to leave the party and thanking him for being given the opportunity to serve the people.

Nointien resigned to join Parti Demokratik Sabah (PDS), a Barisan Nasional component party, during a simple ceremony at PDS president Tan Sri Bernard Dompok's house in Penampang last night.

Nointien, who was also PBS assistant treasurer-general, was quoted as saying that he decided to join the BN after studying the current political scenario.

Nointien, 41, won the Penampang parliamentary seat on a PBS ticket in the 1995 general election defeating Dompok, who was then Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Asked if he was disappointed with Nointien's decision to leave PBS, Pairin said: "We are always disappointed with people who resign for other parties."

"I leave it to the judgment of the people, especially in Moyog, in looking at this resignation. We have been sincere and responsible in fielding someone as a candidate, and it is our hope on behalf of the people that the person will carry out his duties to the best of his ability," he said.

Pairin was approached by newsmen on his way to attend a seminar on "Cyberwar Agenda - Survival Strategy in the New IT Era" at a leading hotel, near the State capital.

On Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent statement that the general election would be the dirtiest, Pairin said:

"I just do not see how opposition parties can create dirty elections because opposition parties cannot conduct elections."

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