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Mahathir-PPP

PARTY MATTERS BEST SETTLED BY MEMBERS - DR M

TUARAN, Sept 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said political party matters were best settled by the party members themselves instead of the courts.

Commenting on a court decision today declaring as invalid Datuk M. Kayveas' presidency of the People's Progressive Party, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't want to say anything on this because we feel that party matters should be left to the members of the party.

"The court only made its decision according to the rule of law," he told reporters after delivering his keynote address at the Barisan Nasional (BN) Youth Convention here.

The High Court in Seremban declared as null and void the recognition given by the Registrar of Societies (ROS) to Datuk M Kayveas and other central executive members of the party.

The court ruled that the court senior assistant registrar had no authority to issue a judgment-in-default to Kayveas based upon which the ROS had given his recognition.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the BN chairman, said the court's decision was based on the law alone but party members would decide on the basis whether they wanted the person or not.

"The court decides based entirely on the law but party constitution is not really a legal document, that is (only) an understanding between the members," he said.

Asked if the court's decision would affect the BN's chances in the coming general election, Dr Mahathir said: "No, it won't."

PPP is one of the 14 component parties of the ruling BN coalition.

On the PPP's request for seats in the elections, Dr Mahathir said that would be decided later.

"Everybody have their own problem. You ask DAP and the so-called Barisan Alternatif...they want to give the worst seats to Keadilan (Parti Keadilan Nasional) to make sure they lose," he said.

The prime minister was also asked on the spate of prosecutions against corporate leaders in the last few weeks, the latest being that of Sabah-based Repco Holdings chairman Low Thiam Hock who was charged in court today for an offence under the Securities Industry Act.

He pleaded not guilty to the charge which relates to the purchase of Repco shares with a view to creating a misleading appearance of the share prices.

Referring to Low's prosecution, Dr Mahathir said: "Whose friend is he. Is he (Datuk Seri) Anwar Ibrahim's friend? I'm very intrigue by this. Anwar had no cronies and yet anybody who is arrested and charged, suddenly becomes somebody who is close to Datuk Seri Anwar."

"So I think that Low must be very close to Anwar," he said in rebutting allegations that the government was practising selective prosecutions, and that those who had been prosecuted so far were Anwar's friends.

-- BERNAMA

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