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Sabah-Dompok

PBS LEADERS SHOULD HAVE JOINED BN EARLIER - DOMPOK

KOTA KINABALU, March 17 (Bernama) -- Former Sabah Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok said today Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) leaders should have joined the Barisan Nasional (BN) five years ago as they ought to have known that their party will not be able to return to power in the state on its own.

"In the last five years, everybody should have been in the BN but they choose to part (with other PBS leaders who joined the BN in 1994)," he told reporters here after handing over duties to the newly-sworn-in chief minister, Datuk Osu Sukam.

Dompok was commenting on a report in a local daily today that the 17 PBS winning candidates in the just-concluded state election had been holding a series of meetings to discuss on the possibility of them joining the BN.

The report, quoting sources, said the meetings were aimed among others at determining the future of the Kadazandusuns following the community's weak representation in the soon-to-be-formed BN government.

Of the 31 seats the BN won, only three are represented by Kadazandusuns -- Kemabong (by Datuk Rubin Balang), Ranau (Datuk Siringan Gubat) and Kuala Penyu (Datuk Wences Angang).

PBS formed the government after the 1994 state election but it collapsed within a month when several PBS assemblymen crossed over to the BN either by joining existing BN component parties or forming new ones.

On whether the current PBS assemblymen could be accepted by the BN, Dompok said: "The prime minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) said that the door is shut. I cannot say anything better than that... it is not for me to contradict the prime minister."

He said the current meetings among PBS leaders were a repetition of the scenario in 1994 when PBS assemblymen gathered to decide the future of Kadazandusuns following the collapse of the PBS government.

Dompok, who is Parti Demokratik Sabah (PDS) president, said that at the 1994 meeting, the PBS leaders concluded that the party could not return to power on its own and they should therefore work together with the BN.

"That was why PDS was formed (and later joined the BN). The old faces in PBS knew that right from 1994.

"We (PDS) have told them that PBS is not going to win the election and we have been proven right," he said.

Asked to comment on the same matter, Chief Minister Osu said it was a non-issue as far as the BN was concerned. He declined to elaborate.

On the composition of the new state cabinet, Osu said: "You will have to wait until Saturday."

The swearing-in of the new state ministers is scheduled to take place on Saturday.

-- BERNAMA

HAK SK