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PPP seeks seats in coming election

THE People's Progressive Party (PPP) of Malaysia, a component of Barisan Nasional (BN), has asked the BN leadership to allocate seats for its members to contest in the coming general election.

Its president Datuk M. Kayveas said the party, which did not contest a single seat in the 1990 and 1995 elections, hopes PPP will be represented in the next general election in view of the growing support it received from the public.

"Since the last election in 1995, we have made vast advances in membership, activities and leadership. We have currently more than 65,000 registered members, including some 2,000 in Sabah," he told newsmen after chairing the PPP supreme council meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Kayveas also claimed that the party currently has strong support in various areas, especially in Perak, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Kedah, Malacca and Johor.

"We are not asking for new seats but hopefully will be given back those seats, where we were strong and represented during the previous elections such as in 1973 when PPP was admitted as BN component.

"At that time, we were represented in four parliamentary and 13 state constituencies, all of which were located in Perak. However, we have to sacrifice and gave the seats to other component parties namely Umno, MCA, MIC and Gerakan. We hope these BN components will consider our request," he said.

Kayveas also said PPP will submit a memorandum to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also BN chairman, by the end of this month to convey its request for seats. The next general election will be held anytime from now until April next year.

Asked whether PPP will consider to contest if the party is given a not-so-safe constituency such as Tanjung or Bukit Bintang, Kayveas said the party will consider this as a challenge but hopes that it will still be allocated in areas where they have already established strong support. On the coming Sabah state election, Kayveas said PPP will deploy a team led by its secretary-general Datuk Dr Mohamad Ashfar Ali to explain to Sabahans why they need to maintain the present BN Government in the state. "Sabahans should realise that they tend to lose in terms of development if they were to give mandate to new and opposition political parties. "Since BN took over Sabah from the opposition, there were already signs of development taking place in the state. But five years is a short period for the present Government to continue to provide development in Sabah," he said.

Kayveas said PPP can contribute towards garnering more support for BN in Sabah because it has the experience, both as a government component party and also an opposition. PPP, which was established in 1953, was an opposition before being admitted as a BN component in 1973.

At the meeting, Kayveas said PPP supreme council members also endorsed its continued support to BN and its leadership under Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad although the party may not be allocated with seats in the general election.

He said PPP also supports the appointment of Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as Deputy Prime Minister as well as the appointment of new ministers and deputy ministers.

"Abdullah's appointment will ensure smooth government administration and

enable the Prime Minister to concentrate on efforts to revive the country's economy," he said.

He said PPP also welcomes Umno's move to set up a panel of lawyers to take legal action against those who make baseless and wild allegations against the Government and its leaders.

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