

Let the people decide if Umno is good for Sarawak: Harris

KOTA KINABALU, Mon:

Former Chief Minister Datuk Harris Salleh said today he was surprised by claims that any expansion of Umno to Sarawak would be against the principle of the party and Barisan Nasional.

The people of Sarawak should be allowed to decide whether they want Umno, he said.

"Personalities are not important . . . the interests of the nation and the people are," he said.

Harris said parochialism has no place in the nation-building process and all

barriers and reservations must be put aside as Malaysians need to integrate.

Former Defence Minister Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha had expressed an intention to bring Umno to Sarawak but Chief Minister Tan Sri Taib Mahmud said it is against the BN principle.

Taib, who is Sarawak BN chairman, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had many times described Patti Pesaka Bumiputra (PBB) as the lynchpin of BN power in Sarawak.

Harris urged Sarawak leaders not to look at the players but at the play instead because politics is the art of the possible.

He said: "Today, PBB looks strong and invincible but who can foretell the future? It will be a folly to claim that PBB is Umno in Sarawak. PBB is not Umno and Umno can never be PBB."

He said that previously in Sabah, the now defunct Usno believed that it was Umno and, therefore, there was no need for Umno to spread its wings to the state.
