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Mahathir-PBS

DR M: PBS RE-ENTRY INTO BN DEPENDS ON CONSENSUS AMONG MEMBERS

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- The entry of Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) into the Barisan Nasional (BN) depends on consensus from the 13 component parties in the coalition, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said he was satisfied with PBS president Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan's explanation about the party's intention to return to the BN fold at a meeting in Putrajaya yesterday.

During the 45-minute meeting, Pairin formally handed in the party's application to rejoin the BN.

"I'm satisfied with Pairin's explanation but we have to ask all the other component parties in the BN before PBS can be taken in," he told reporters after handing over keys for bungalows and double-storey terrace houses to 147 Orang Asli in Bukit Lanjan here.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN Chairman, stressed that he had to ask other parties in the ruling coalition, especially Sabah-based component parties, for their endorsement of the admission.

"We have to ask all of them. Maybe some of them are afraid but we are democratic, so we have to obtain their approval," he said.

PBS pulled out from the BN a week before polling in the 1990 general election to team up with Gagasan Rakyat comprising two opposition parties -- DAP and the now defunct Parti Melayu Semangat 46.

Dr Mahathir had described PBS's pull-out as "stabbing in the back."

Asked on his meeting with Pairin on Thursday, he said: "He says he is aware of his mistake. He has apologised, so it is not nice if we don't do anything," he said.

He said if there are political parties interested in joining the BN, they must be sincere and not do something that would jeopardise the ruling coalition.

Asked if he had been given any guarantee by PBS that it would not repeat the 1990 episode, he said: "There is no guarantee, your enemy of today can be your best friend tomorrow, your best friend of tomorrow can even be going to jail the next day."

-- BERNAMA

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