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Pandikar-Akar

I'M LIKE A FOOTBALLER, SAYS PANDIKAR

KOTA KINABALU, May 20 (Bernama) -- Describing himself as footballer who is prepared to be fielded in any position, former Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat (Akar) president Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia today said he was leaving it to the Umno leadership with regard to his future role.

"I'm like a footballer in the Premier League...if asked to play up front, then I will attack, if given the role as a defender, then I will defend," he said in his speech at the Akar special assembly today.

The assembly, which was attended by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, decided to dissolve the 12-year-old party with its members joining Umno en bloc.

Pandikar, who is also Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said he accepted whatever decision was taken and would implement the responsibility entrusted on him to the best of his ability.

He also explained why the decision was taken.

"In this matter, many may think that our action was a stupid one and a big mistake and was made without vision.

"In fact, it's also not impossible that some people would say that we are the biggest of the 'frogs' in Sabah," he said referring to the frequent party hopping in the state's political history.

He said the dissolution of Akar was actually in response to the call by Dr Mahathir who placed strong importance on solidarity which was proven by his willingness to discuss the Malay unity with the opposition.

"The call for solidarity by the Prime Minister should be heeded. Thus, Akar made the move to respond to the call in sincerity by dissolving the party and applying to join Umno to strengthen unity," he said.

He said Umno was chosen because it was the largest and most successful party in the country.

"However, as party president I have given Akar members and leaders the freedom to choose which of the component parties of Barisan Nasional (BN) is the most suitable for them," he said.

Pandikar said Akar had faced various challenges since its inception in September 1989, including internal crisis which almost led the party to be de-registered.

-- BERNAMA

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