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Mahathir-BN

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN SABAH UMNO WILL NOT AFFECT OTHER PARTIES

KOTA KINABALU, May 20 (Bernama) -- Sabah Umno's move to admit members of the Chinese community as members will not affect the membership of other Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties, Prime Minister and BN Chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Sabah Umno's willingness to accept ex-members including Chinese members of the Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat (Akar) which was dissolved today, was of no consequence to other BN parties as the number of such members was not that big.

The MCA's position had not been affected by the existence of the Gerakan or the PPP both of which also admitted Chinese members, he told a news conference after presiding over the dissolution of Akar, a component of the Sabah Barisan Nasional, here.

Asked if the latest developments had the support of Umno members in the peninsula, Dr Mahathir said they had long accepted Sabah Umno which had members from different religions.

Dr Mahathir said other BN component parties in the peninsula also accepted decisions made by Umno.

On the possibility of Umno eventually opening its doors to all Chinese, Dr Mahathir said: "Why not? If it comes to a stage when the people are not so conscious about their race, at that stage it is possible."

However, he said if such a development should occur, the change must take place gradually, taking into consideration all factors.

"Any decision from the top imposed on the people, will bound to fail," Dr Mahathir said.

On whether BN component parties in Sabah should merge into three main parties, he said component parties in Sabah should continue working together beforehand.

"They should work together first but if they find that it is good to have a smaller number of parties, then why not?"

On the other hand, with the dissolution of Akar and its members joining Umno en-bloc, Sabah Umno would become stronger than before, said Dr Mahathir.

"In the past, Akar members have worked closely with Umno and hence, it will not be too difficult for them to do so now within the party," he said.

-- BERNAMA

HAK NT AAM