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Mahathir-IPF

MAHATHIR DISAPPOINTED WITH IPF'S DECISION

KOTA KINABALU, Feb 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he was disappointed with the decision made by the All-Malaysian Indian Progressive Front (IPF) to reject the offers by the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) and the People's Progressive Party (PPP) to join them.

"I am disappointed because we have a problem in not being able to accept IPF into Barisan Nasional (BN) while we recognise IPF as a staunch supporter of BN," he told reporters after meeting members of the Gaya and Tanjung Aru Umno divisions, here.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on the decision made by IPF delegates who voted to reject the offers from both the MIC and PPP at their ninth general assembly held at the Putra World Trade Centre today.

Of the total 2,950 delegates, the MIC and PPP received one vote each while there were two spoilt votes.

The results of the votes was announced by IPF deputy president Dr Harcharan Singh at 4.20pm.

"I was hoping they would either chose the MIC or PPP...but look's like their stance is being supported by a majority of IPF members.

"The easy way to join BN is via the MIC or PPP but it seems like they are not interested...so we cannot do anything," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the BN chairman, however hoped IPF members will continue to support the struggles of the coalition.

"I hope they will support the BN from outside," he said.

Asked if IPF will be accepted to join the BN, the Prime Minister said, "We can't because we have to go by consensus".

On his meeting with members of the Gaya and Tanjung Aru Umno divisions, Dr Mahathir said he had briefed them on the importance of cooperation and support for leaders from other parties.

"Judging from the fact that Umno Sabah had no experience with Umno when it was formed ...I am using this opportunity to explain Umno's ideals and how we attained success," he said.

He also said Umno members from both divisions also raised specific issues including the lack of water and electricity supply in some areas.

"We discussed and we found some solutions," he said.

Asked if the question of branch and division elections, to be held in March, was discussed, Dr Mahathir said, "No not directly, but I reminded them that if there is a contest, the losers must support the winners.

On whether he was ready to meet with leaders of the Malay Action Front who recently organised a Malay awareness gathering, he said, "If they want to see me, I want to know why..we don't want to make it seem as if we were going to fight the Chinese or something like that.

-- BERNAMA

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