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PBRs to submit memo urging equality for ethnic groups

KOTA KINABALU, Thurs. - Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah will be submitting a memorandum to the Barisan Nasional leadership to request for a quota system that will ensure equality for the ethnic groups of Sabah.

PBRs president Datuk Joseph Kurup said the party will urge the Government to create a system that will be fair to all ethnic groups according to their composition in terms of population in the State.

"The memorandum will contain several matters including transparency of the government leadership and land issues," he said at the 7th anniversary celebration of the party at Berjaya Palace Hotel last night.

He did not say when the memorandum will be submitted.

Kurup stressed that the Kadazandusun-Murut community make up 40 per cent of the total population of the State and it is the party's hope that the community will never be left out of mainstream development.

He said community leaders are striving to ensure that the Kadazandusun-Murut people are given the opportunity to be involved in the administration of the State based on BN's concept of power-sharing.

"Through fair and just power-sharing, the image of BN would not only be protected but would also attract more people to join the component party," he said.

Kurup, in his speech, made no attempts to hide the disappointment of the Kadazandusun-Murut community and the non-Muslim Bumiputera people, as a whole, over the recent changes in the rotation system of the Sabah chief ministership.

He said the non-Muslim Bumiputera communities had hoped that after Umno State liaison chief Datuk Osu Sukam had served his term as Chief Minister, it would be their turn.

However, Liberal Democratic Party president Datuk Chong Kah Kiat was appointed as Chief Minister for a two-year term by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last week.

"It was very unfortunate that the non-Muslim Bumiputera Kadazandusun-Murut community, which made up 40 per cent of the people in the State, was not given the confidence (to lead)." He said the community will continue to be sidelined if their internal problems are not resolved. He said there was a rift in the non-Muslim Bumiputera community which had weakened them to the extent that the community had lost its integrity and was manipulated easily.

"Instead of feeling disappointed and sad, we should revive our semangat (spirit) to overcome this failure because to me, this failure has made us realise our weaknesses," Kurup said.

"Tonight, I urge the non-Muslim Bumiputera to renew their determination and strength to regain their position as an important and respected race in this country."

He said the non-Muslim Bumiputera people in the BN fold must learn to accept the crossover of several opposition members into BN as a noble decision.

Kurup said the former opposition members were not after posts in BN but had realised that they could not deliver their promises to bring progress to the people as long as they were not in the Government.

He also said differences of opinion was not uncommon in politics but if they were constantly exposed to the public, they would not bring any good to the party.

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