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Abdullah-PBS/(with pix)

PBS ENTRY INTO BN, A POSITIVE SIGN FOR SABAH, SAYS ABDULLAH

KOTA KINABALU, Nov 24 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) entry into the Barisan Nasional (BN) would provide positive change to Sabah's politics.

He said there would be smooth running of the state government business as there would be no further disruption in terms of politicking among the political parties.

"The PBS wants to return to the BN. For Sabah it is a major change in political situation as it means less politicking among the parties. The people will also find that their problems will be easy to resolve," he said when opening the 12th congress of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) here today.

PBS president Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan was also present. He was invited as observer to the meeting.

LDP led by Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat is the oldest Sabah BN component party, having joined the coalition in 1991. It was set up in August 1989.

Abdullah said that in the absence of excessive politicking, the state government could focus its attention to bringing progress to the people and the state.

"I'm confident that if the political situation continues to improve the state will attain progress desired by the people," he said.

Pairin submitted the party's application to rejoin the BN to BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last week.

Meanwhile, Chong in his speech also touched on the positive change that would take place once PBS had been accepted as a BN component party.

"I am confident that the state can better address many of the socioeconomic issues that it faces with the cooperation of PBS. The intense domestic politicking will also end once PBS is in the BN fold.

"I am pleased that PBS has applied to rejoin the BN family. I congratulate PBS President for his wise decision," he said.

At a news conference after opening the LDP Congress, Abdullah said there was no need to deploy additional forces in the east coast of Sabah as the security surveillance there had already been strengthened.

"The surveillance has already been increased even before the incident (in the southern Philippines). If there is a necessity, we'll do it but if it is not then we won't," he said referring to the fear that many people in southern Philippines might flee to Sabah following the armed revolt launched by Nur Misuari, Governor of Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Asked what role Malaysia could play to help resolve the situation, Abdullah said it was an internal matter.

He pointed out the Asean policy of non-interference in the internal affair of member countries.

Abdullah, who is Home Minister, was also asked on reports that Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo had sought help from Malaysia and Indonesia to end the fresh revolt in that country.

Abdullah said: "There is already a letter from President Arroyo to the Prime Minister and I think there could be some indication as to what we can do."

-- BERNAMA

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