

Rehabilitate SNAP through new party, says Dr M

STAR - 8 NOV 2002

PUTRAJAYA: The deregistered Sarawak National Party (SNAP) needs to be rehabilitated through the setting up of a new party, said Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Barisan, he said, was willing to consider admitting the new party in place of SNAP, which was deregistered on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters after launching two new Proton models here yesterday, Dr Mahathir said there should be no opposition to the setting up of the new party.

Asked whether Barisan would still be prepared to consider accepting two new parties in place of SNAP in case the two opposing groups in the deregistered party were to form two separate parties, Dr Mahathir said: "We will have to assess that."

SNAP, which was set up in 1961, was deregistered by the Registrar of Societies after it failed to resolve its leadership crisis. It has six assemblymen and four Members of Parliament.

The Sarawak Barisan, at its meeting in Kuching on Wednesday, decided to allow all 'partyless' SNAP elected representatives to join any of its

three remaining component parties - Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu, Sarawak United People's Party and Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak. Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Registrar of Societies had acted correctly in deregistering SNAP.

He said he had consulted the Attorney-General, who affirmed that the deregistration was in accordance with the law.

"We have consulted the Attorney-General (Datuk Seri Abdul Gani Patail) and he said it (the deregistration) is in accordance with Section 16 of the Societies Act," Abdullah told reporters after meeting Thai Home Minister Wan Muhamad Noor Matha at the Home Ministry here yesterday.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said SNAP could also appeal against the deregistration.

In Kuching, Datuk William Mawan Ikom said he expected his group's application to set up the Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party to be approved in two weeks.

"The application was submitted to the registrar on Tuesday," he added.