

Ex-chief Wong seeks urgent meeting with PM

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■ By STEPHEN THEN

MIRI: Deregistered Sarawak National Party (SNAP) former president Datuk Amar James Wong Kim Min is making a desperate attempt to save the party he has controlled for three decades from sinking into political oblivion.

Wong, who at 81 is the country's oldest and longest serving active politician, is seeking an urgent meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman.

Sources told *The Star* yesterday that Wong wanted to meet Dr Mahathir tomorrow in Putrajaya to appeal for the Prime Minister's help to save SNAP.

"The meeting with the Prime Minister is deemed very urgent now that the Registrar of Societies (ROS) has already approved the registration of the Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP) which was formed by the faction in SNAP (led by Datuk William Mawan Ikom) which was opposed to Wong.

"Now that Ikom's group have already formed a new party, there is a real danger SNAP will cease to exist totally, unless the ROS' decision to deregister it is overturned soon.

"Wong wants to try to ensure that SNAP, at the very least, can still exist as a party although a new party has been formed," said a source who is aligned to Wong's camp.

The source said Wong would not give up his struggle to save SNAP, noting that former secretary-general Datuk Justine Jinggut and former senior vice-president Richard Wong (James Wong's son) would accompany Wong to Kuala Lumpur.

Former deputy secretary-general Stanley Jugol confirmed that attempts had been made by Wong to contact Dr Mahathir and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"Yes, attempts have been made by Wong to arrange for an urgent meeting with the Prime Minister but so far, there has been no confirmation from the Prime Minister's office on any date

for any meeting.

"Wong will try to overturn the ROS' decision to deregister SNAP. It is a massive task but Wong is prepared for it," said Jugol.

The meeting with Dr Mahathir was very important because the outcome would determine how much chance Wong and those still loyal to him would have in saving SNAP, he added.

"We will only have a clearer picture of what lies ahead (for Wong's camp) after hearing what the Prime Minister has to say," he stressed.

Meanwhile, the Sarawak Barisan component parties are already congratulating Ikom for his success in forming the SPDP.

Sarawak United People's Party secretary-general Datuk Sim Kheng Hui said the formation of the new party would resolve the crisis in SNAP, adding that his party would have no objections to SPDP joining Barisan.

Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu Youth chief Douglas Unggah said the new party would help maintain stability in the state Barisan.