

10/11/2002

SPDP seeks State BN approval

Zubaidah Abu Bakar; Sulok Tawie

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Newly-approved Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP) needs only the nod from the Sarawak Barisan Nasional to be accepted as a component of the coalition.

"If the State BN approves its application to join the coalition at the State level, it is only a matter of endorsing it at the national level," BN secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamad Rahmat said today.

Mohamad said it was not necessary for the BN supreme council to hold a special meeting to discuss SPDP's application.

He said BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad could make a decision based on the Sarawak BN's endorsement of the new party.

SPDP, formed by a dissenting Sarawak National Party (SNAP) group led by Environment and Public Health Minister Datuk William Mawan Ikom, had its application for registration approved by the Registrar of Societies Datuk Ismail Dolah Harun yesterday.

Its registration was approved three days after the deregistration of SNAP by the Registrar of Societies.

The party's application was submitted on Nov 5, hours after SNAP was deregistered for its failure to resolve its leadership crisis.

Yesterday, Mawan said one of the SPDP's immediate tasks was to apply immediately to join BN. Another would be to immediately register the deregistered SNAP members.

Dr Mahathir was reported as saying that he would like to see SNAP, one of the four BN component parties in Sarawak and among the oldest in the State, rehabilitated through the formation of a new party.

He said the coalition was prepared to consider admitting the new party if an application was made.

Sarawak Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abdul Taib Mahmud had said that the Sarawak BN had decided to allow the MPs and State Assembly members to "park" with the three remaining BN component parties while awaiting the outcome of either the party's appeal against the deregistration or an application to set up new parties.

The other three Sarawak BN component parties are Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) and Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS).

Meanwhile in Kuching, a SPDP leader Dr Judson Sakai Tagal said the party would formally submit an application to join BN after its inaugural general assembly on Wednesday.

According to Dr Tagal, the appointments of pro-tem office-bearers would be made at the general assembly which would be attended by former SNAP grassroots leaders and division chairmen.

"We will also form various committees and approve SPDP's membership list," Dr Tagal, who is also Assistant Minister for Infrastructure Development and Communications, said.

The delegates to the assembly will also be briefed by the party leaders on its development.

Dr Tagal said a working committee, chaired by Assistant Tourism Minister Peter Nyarok, who is also the State Assemblyman for Krian, met today to finalise preparations for the general assembly.