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Jeffrey: Delegates conference legal, any meeting called by Kurup illegal

KOTA KINABALU, Wed. - Newly-elected Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah president Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan today said the delegates conference held yesterday was legal and conducted according to the party's constitution.

He said any meeting held today by Tan Sri Joseph Kurup was illegal because the delegates conference had ended yesterday, as stated in the PBRS' 7th annual congress programme book.

"Today's election and meeting is illegal and is an exercise to satisfy them (Kurup's faction). I will file a report to the Registrar of Societies on this," Jeffrey told a Press conference at the Tambunan Golf Club in Penampang after holding an informal meeting with some 20 supreme council members and division heads.

He said Kurup should accept the decision made by delegates yesterday to re-instate his membership and subsequently vote him in as party president.

On Kurup's earlier statement that he would take legal action against delegates who voted Jeffrey's faction in, the Bingkor Assemblyman said Kurup could do as he pleased.

"The delegates whose names were listed in the programme book were approved by Kurup's leadership ... he will be taking action against delegates who had a right to attend the meeting," he said.

Jeffrey also said he had sent a note to Sabah Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Chong Kah Kiat on what transpired yesterday and would make an appointment to meet him soon.

He also said that he would be sending a report on proceedings at the congress to Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad soon.

Asked why newly-elected deputy president Johnny Goh and vice-presidents Atong Mangabis and Karim Adam were with Kurup and not with him today, Jeffrey said he was sure the three leaders knew what they were doing. He said all three had not turned down their election by his camp to the posts.

Jeffrey also said a PBRS supreme council meeting would be held within a week. "I have not called them (the three) yet for a supreme council meeting. We will call for a proper meeting."

Pressed further, Jeffrey said the three had a right to do what they liked but the time would come when they would have to make a stand.

On whether he was prepared for a long legal battle with Kurup to determine which meeting was conducted according to the constitution, Jeffrey said he was not expecting a long legal tussle.

"This is because I don't see the need for one. There was nothing wrong with our meeting."

Jeffrey said he withdrew his writ of summons yesterday seeking a declaration that notwithstanding his suspension as party deputy president he was entitled to contest in the election of office-bearers.

(Kurup in his capacity as PBRS president suspended Jeffrey last Friday, citing five allegations including that of an affair with a married woman.)

"After I withdrew the writ, I was free and delegates had the power to lift my suspension," he said.

To another question, Jeffrey said he did not want to speculate on whether the present problems would lead him to discard PBRS and form a new party.

"I do not want to speculate on something that has not happened yet. We

must focus on the present."

Jeffrey also said that he was always prepared to meet Kurup and that it was the latter who had refused to see him. "I am always open, always willing to speak and discuss things."

On how he would unite members in the party which was now divided into two groups, Jeffrey said it would not be a difficult process.

"If members want progress they can see who can offer progress. This has happened to almost every (political) party. There is nothing difficult about uniting members."

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