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PBRs leaders should unite, says DPM

PETALING JAYA, Sun. - Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah leaders and members should unite for the sake of the people and the Barisan Nasional in the State, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said PBRs, which recently experienced a leadership tussle, should reconsolidate and work on improving itself in the future.

Abdullah, who is also Umno deputy president, said this when commenting on the Registrar of Societies Datuk Ismail Dollah's decision to declare Tan Sri Joseph Kurup the rightful president of PBRs.

"It is the ROS decision and we accept. I hope Dr Jeffrey (Kitinggan) accepts the decision because the most important thing is for us to remain united and strengthen Barisan Nasional. My advice to both of them is to reconcile," Abdullah said.

He was speaking to reporters after receiving Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base here.

Meanwhile, Barisan Nasional secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat, who was present, said the ROS decision had ended the squabble.

"I'm happy with the decision. I hope it will be accepted by all, including the opposing faction as this would stabilise the political situation in Sabah."

The PBRs leadership crisis began with the election of Kurup, who is the incumbent president, and Dr Jeffrey as president by their respective supporters in separate meetings at the party's seventh annual congress.

Dr Jeffrey won the post unopposed on Jan 29, while Kurup was re-elected president on Jan 30.

In Kota Kinabalu, Dr Jeffrey said he will send an official letter to Ismail for an explanation on why Kurup was declared the rightful party president.

Jeffrey said delegates and division heads were also against the ROS decision.

"We want an explanation from the ROS because based on the law, the ROS does not have the right to determine who is president.

"There are only two ways the ROS can intervene in the crisis faced by the party. Based on Section 16 of the Societies Act, the ROS can issue a show-cause letter to both sides who are in dispute and if both sides fail to solve the problem, the ROS can de-register the party.

"The second option is based on Section 40 of the Act in which the ROS can only intervene when parties in dispute request the Registrar to do so."

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