

08 JUL 2002
Mahathir-Snap
SNAP WILL RESOLVE PARTY PROBLEM- DR MAHATHIR

KUCHING, July 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed confidence that the Sarawak National Party (Snap), a component party of Barisan Nasional (BN) at the state level will resolve its internal problems.

"I have no advice. I am sure they will resolve the party leadership crisis. Yes, I am certain they will resolve their problem," he told a press conference after opening the Lembaga Amanah Kebajikan Masjid Negeri Sarawak Building (Bangunan Masja) here.

On whether Snap leaders had met him, he said he met Snap president Datuk Amar James Wong at the opening of the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) 10th general assembly at Santubong today.

"But we did not talk about such things (Snap problems). We are being polite," he said.

Snap's crisis began in April this year when a group of eight senior party leaders led by deputy president Datuk Seri Peter Tinggom urged Wong to step down.

On recruitment of retired English teachers to improve the language proficiency among students, Dr Mahathir said the government was looking into the matter.

"The retired teachers do not want to be employed as ordinary teachers and nor do they want to be full-time teachers. They want to work a few hours a day, just teaching English," he said.

He said there was no provision in the government for such employment and hence the government would have to study the rates of payment and so on.

On using English as the medium of instruction, he said: "We will retain the present system of education which used Malay as the medium of instruction, and because of certain problems we face in teaching science and mathematics, we want to use English."

Asked whether his retirement in October next year might affect political relations among BN component parties, he said: "I am not involved with political parties in BN. I am only competent to speak about Umno."

To another question whether developing countries had asked him to give public lectures, he said if people invited him to give such talk, which they even do now, he would give the talk. "It is fun," he added.

"I am retiring. I am 77. I don't think it's right to take on any job. Even Tunku Abdul Rahman didn't take any job at the age of 77. He retired after being secretary-general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and he was much younger man than I," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that he would not take any job with the OIC.

"I am not competent to hold the job and my job is to sit at home and try to help the party and even the government if they want to ask me to do something."

Meanwhile Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said he had no plans to quit politics yet.

"I will give the answer when the times comes," he said when asked whether he was contemplating quitting politics after 22 years as Sarawak Chief Minister.

-- BERNAMA
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