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Star-BN

STAR WILLING TO JOIN BN

KUCHING, Nov 8 (Bernama) -- The State Reform Party (Star) has not ruled out the possibility of joining the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) if the five-year-old party can be accepted without prejudice by Sarawak's BN component parties.

Its president, Dr Patau Rubis, said that the Star, being the only Sarawak-based opposition party in the country, had always been fighting for the right of the people in line with the aspiration and objectives of the BN.

"I never left the BN but since I was sacked by the (state) BN, then I have to look for other alternatives in continuing my political career," he told Bernama here today.

Dr Patau, who once served as senior vice-president of the now deregistered Sarawak National Party (Snap), said that even as an opposition, the Star was willing to assist the BN in fighting threats that could undermine the country.

"We were formed because of the people and we are willing to work with the BN if asked to do so," he said.

Asked whether the Star would submit its application to join the BN soon, Dr Patau said that the issue does not arise yet since all factors must be studied before a decision could be made.

"First, we must be able to contribute seats to the BN and then we can consider joining the coalition," he said.

Before forming the Star, Dr Patau was Assistant Minister of Finance and Public Utilities before being sacked by Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud and suspended indefinitely by Snap in 1995 due to his alleged support for an independent candidate in the general election.

Last week, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad issued an open invitation to opposition parties to join the BN since it practises an open policy and willing to share power to counter threats from external enemies.

The invitation however was rejected by the DAP, PAS and Keadilan.

-- BERNAMA

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