

# Moggie recognises Tajem as new chief

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**KUCHING:** Datuk Daniel Tajem, the legitimately elected president of Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS), said Datuk Amar Leo Moggie.

The Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister said he recognised Tajem's election as the new party chief because it followed normal procedures and was in accordance with the party constitution.

"I don't think there is any reason to doubt the legality of the party election," he told reporters after opening the PBDS's sixth triennial delegates conference at Santubong Resorts near here yesterday.

Some 1,900 delegates and observers from branches state-wide attended the two-day general assembly.

Tajem's rival Datuk Dr James Masing and his group have protested to the Registrar of Societies over the declaration by the party's credentials committee that Tajem has been elected uncontested as the new party chief, claiming that the nomination for party election had been carried out in secrecy and without their knowledge.

Moggie said the best way for Tajem and Dr Masing to resolve their differences was to talk behind the scenes and not through the media.

"One lesson we should learn is that there is too much media coverage (on the party's internal problems) in the past two years when these things should have been discussed privately."

He said he had not discussed the party's internal problems with either Barisan Nasional chairman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad or Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Tajem, in his speech, said party aspirations transcended the commu-

nal divide as the party fully subscribed to multi-racialism.

"Admittedly, if PBDS is communal in character, its perspective is non-racial in scope through its membership in the Barisan Nasional," he added.

Tajem said PBDS was formed in 1983 to accommodate the strong Dayak sentiments, provide a convenient vehicle for their political aspirations and serve as a forum for political education among them.

"It was founded not to isolate the Dayaks from the mainstream of political, social and economic develop-

ment," he said.

Reiterating that the Dayaks' future rested with the Barisan Nasional, Tajem assured that the party was committed to the coalition at both the state and federal levels.

Tajem also paid a glowing tribute to Moggie, who was later made a life member and president emeritus.

"He is a giant among men in the Dayak society," he said.

Moggie later handed over a *parang ilang*, a *berayang* (a type of spear) and a warrior shield (the symbols of the PBDS emblem) to Tajem to symbolise the transfer of party leadership