

Pairin goes on the defensive for Sabah BN
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Deputy Chief Minister Joseph Pairin Kitingan sees no reason for the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) to sideline any component party in Sabah.

Instead, he says, alienation is being caused by parties that "whine, moan and groan" without working together with the others for solutions.

"If any problems are raised at the branch or divisional levels, the right bn supreme council mt meeting sapp sabah issue 190608 pairin kitingan approach would be to discuss among members and compile a report to be sent to the state and federal leaderships," Pairin (left) said on the sidelines of two Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) divisional annual meetings in Tanjung Aru and Petagas.

He warned party members not to inadvertently become "part of the problem, rather than the solution, as such an attitude will not bring us anywhere".

Pairin was commenting on statements by the younger Kitingan in politics, Jeffrey Gapari, and several of his own party leaders, including those from Tanjung Aru and Petagas, that PBS and the United Pasok Momogun Kadazan Dusun Murut Organisation (Upko) "were merely putting on a show in BN".

Pairin, who is also the Huguansiou (paramount chief) of the Kadazan Dusun Muruts, did not touch on the recurring complaints levelled against the state BN leadership by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Many LDP leaders have been removed from their government positions in recent months.

PBS deputy president Maximus Jonity Ongkili remains cautiously optimistic on the political situation in Sabah amidst opposition inroads. However, unlike Pairin, he doesn't hesitate to mince his words.

"Land issues are a serious problem, especially in Beluran, Semporna, Pitas and Kota Marudu," Ongkili said. "Certain quarters, in handling land disputes, are bullying villagers into vacating their land."

Be professional, Ongkili tells civil servants

The problems apparently involve overlapping claims, with large tracts that infringe on customary rights land being awarded to companies, communities being forcibly removed for "intrusion" into gazetted government land and long delays in surveying and processing of land applications.

Ongkili hoped all parties in a dispute, whether over land or other issues, would conduct themselves rationally and remain civil at all times.

"Civil servants in particular should be professional in their work and act based on fairness, justice and respect for human dignity," he added. "They should avoid doing barbaric things such as burning houses and poisoning agricultural crops to force villagers to move out of their land."

Both the Tanjung Aru and Petagas meetings were marked by demands that the Institute for Development Studies Sabah (Ideas) gets the statistics on Borneonisation of the federal civil service from the Public Services Commission Malaysia (PSC) and appointments in Petronas, federal statutory bodies and GLCs.

The divisions want the state PSC to publish the 2007-2010 figures by race, qualification and gender for several areas, including appointments to the pool services; appointments of department heads; heads of statutory bodies, government agencies and state GLCs; and state and Sabah Foundation scholarships for university studies

Positions in government departments, an issue side-stepped by Pairin, who was short on specifics, were also at the heart of complaints from other PBS leaders.

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