

'Not the right time for Taib to step down now'

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At a time when the political situation in Sarawak is a little uncertain, especially with some Sarawak BN component parties facing some internal problems, it is not right for anyone to demand that Chief Minister Taib Mahmud steps down, says the Dewan Rakyat's deputy speaker Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar.

bn supreme council mt meeting sapp sabah issue 190608 taib mahmudHe said Taib, who would have completed his 30th year as Sarawak chief minister in March next year, should continue to lead the state in order to deal with pertinent issues within the state BN coalition.

"It's not the right time... it's like when you are sailing in the deep blue sea with very strong winds and choppy seas and your captain cannot just abandon ship because he has to take the responsibility to sail the ship to safety," he told Bernama today.

Wan Junaidi, who is also a supreme council member of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), the backbone of Sarawak's BN and a party led by Taib, said bickering among various factions, including some within the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), remain unresolved even as the state elections drew nearer.

The term of the Sarawak state legislative assembly will end in June next year and its dissolution will pave the way for state elections to be held any time now.

While the PBB chief openly said that he wanted to step down in 2006 but decided otherwise after many in PBB persuaded him to stay on, Wan Junadi said it could not be denied that there were also rumours circulating that Taib was preparing to call it a day this time around.

"Of course, there are rumours, spin doctors (left and right) who say a lot of things and there are blogs (and everybody knows it), there are newspapers and reporters (saying this and that)... so many people having their say," he said.

However, he stressed that it was up to the party members to decide what their president should do in that sort of situation.

Oath of loyalty to Taib

Based on these rumours, he said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, as the national BN chairperson, had the right to have a heart-to-heart talk and listen to Taib on the latter's views.

Taib was quoted recently as saying that he was ready to go if he was no longer wanted by the people, party and prime minister.

parliament house leak leakage 050508 wan junaidiWan Junaidi also emphasised that the party's overall view and not just the voices of two or three needed to be taken into consideration as the silent majority's view on the matter was not being sought yet simply because "they did not have access to the media".

That was why, he explained, that PBB made a stand in Miri on Monday when the party's supreme council members led by deputy president Alfred Jabu gave their full support to Taib to remain as chief minister, he explained.

As representatives of the silent majority in PBB, their stand demonstrated that they were ready to sacrifice and fight against threats to destabilise the BN government in Sarawak.

The oath of loyalty and support for Taib, which also reaffirmed that Taib's services were still needed to ensure all development and transformation efforts were not thwarted, was handed over to the chief minister upon his arrival at the Miri airport to attend the 53rd state-level Merdeka celebrations.

Wan Junaidi stressed that the responsibility to step down or not was not for the 74-year-old state BN chairperson to decide solely as all the four BN component parties also needed to make a clear stand on the matter as well.

In the case of PBB, it had already made its stand very clear on Monday, he said.

- Bernama

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