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DR M: WE HAVE EVALUATION PROCESS

Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia doesn't accept everyone, says party chairman

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PARTI Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) will check and evaluate any individual applying to become a member of the party before accepting them.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the party had an evaluation process which all applicants must undergo before being accepted as members.

"We don't accept everyone. We will evaluate them first," he told reporters after attending the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT) Consultation 2018 Dialogue Session here yesterday.

Six Umno members of parliament recently announced that they were leaving the party to become independent MPs.

They were Hulu Terengganu MP Datuk Rosol Wahid; Datuk Seri Ikmal Hisham Abdul Aziz (Tanah Merah); Datuk Shabudin Yahaya (Tasek Gelugor); Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainuddin (Larut); Datuk Mohd Fasihah Mohd Fakeh (Sabak Bernam) and Datuk Dr Latiff Ahmad (Mersing).

Last Wednesday, almost the entire leadership line-up from Sabah Umno, which included five MPs, nine state assemblymen and two senators, announced they were leaving the party.

They claimed that their reason for doing so was because the party lacked direction.

Dr Mahathir was also asked on his political secretary Muham-

mad Zahid Md Arip being implicated in the corruption charges against Tan Sri Isa Abdul Samad.

Dr Mahathir replied that Zahid was not guilty until proven in court.

"Accused doesn't mean guilty. If he has been tried and found guilty, only then is he guilty," he said.

Zahid was alleged to be the middleman in nine out of the 10 corruption charges filed against Isa.

Isa, who was previously Felda chairman and former Negri Sembilan menteri besar, was charged with nine counts of accepting bribes amounting to RM3 million in connection with the purchase of a hotel in Sarawak for RM160 million.

Zahid, who was Isa's former special officer, had allegedly col-

lected the amount on the latter's behalf.

Meanwhile, PKR Advisory Council chairman Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Dr Wan Ismail reiterated that PKR would not accept former Umno leaders into its fold.

This was because the party was not certain if they could bring about a reform agenda for the country, she said.

Dr Wan Azizah, who is also deputy prime minister, also assured those who had joined the party before the 14th General Election (GE14) were there because of the reform agenda.

"At the moment, we will not accept Umno (members). Those who have been with us before GE14 have given us the confidence and faith that they want reform.

Accused doesn't mean guilty. If he (Muhammad Zahid Md Arip) has been tried and found guilty, only then is he guilty.

"As for the others, we need to see. We have to engage them. The people have sought change and a new government to bring reforms to the country," she told reporters at the Parliament lobby after winding up at the Dewan Negara sitting here yesterday.

PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was quoted as saying that PKR would not consider accepting former Umno leaders to join the party despite a request from some Umno leaders.