

'Bersatu not taking over Sabah govt'

Party isn't a threat but will help strengthen Shafie's administration instead, says Dr M

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KOTA KINABALU: With Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia now the second largest party in the Sabah government after eight former Umno assemblymen and an independent joined its ranks, chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said that it has no intention to wrest power.

Launching the Sabah Bersatu chapter yesterday, Dr Mahathir promised to work with the Parti Warisan Sabah-led state coalition government of Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal.

Bersatu, said Dr Mahathir, was in Sabah to support and strengthen the existing state government and at the same time, allow for a stronger government in Malaysia.

"We are not here to take over or kick any party out. We need strong and united parties as well as good cooperation between all the parties in the country to make Malaysia a nation that is admired by others in the world - just like it was in the past," he said during the launch at the ITCC Mall in Penampang here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir was responding to questions on talk that Bersatu might be involved with other parties, including the opposition, to topple the current state government via defections.

Currently, Warisan has 31 elected state seats in the 60-member assem-



New chapter begins: Dr Mahathir at the launch at the ITCC Mall in Penampang. With him are (from left) Bersatu president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, state chief coordinator Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, vice-president Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir, secretary-general Datuk Marzuki Yahya and state coordinator Datuk Mohd Rafiq Naizamohideen. — Bernama

bly with Sabah DAP (six), PKR (two) and Upko (four).

The current coalition - with Bersatu bringing in nine - now has a four-fifths majority in the 60-member house. The opposition is left with PBS at five seats, Sabah STAR (three) and Umno (one).

There is no indication if Sipitang MP Yamani Hafez Musa, the son of former chief minister Tan Sri Musa Aman, was accepted by the party.

Five other former Sabah Umno

MPs joined Bersatu last month.

Giving his assurance that the federal Cabinet ministers from Warisan would be maintained, Dr Mahathir said Sabah Bersatu was not asking for any seat.

"We do not want to force anyone to do anything," he told reporters after the launch.

He said that before the party's decision to enter Sabah, it had received numerous requests from parties and leaders in Sabah to

join Bersatu.

"But we waited as we felt that then it was not the right time for us and that it would jeopardise our performance in the 14th General Election," he added.

Dr Mahathir said that after GE14, they felt that it was the right time to enter Sabah and give support to the state government and ensure the state got the development it needed.

For that to work, clean and rational leaders were needed for the peo-

ple's benefit, he said.

"Bersatu does not allow for any corruption or power abuse to happen in the party and for these practices to thrive in this new government," he noted.

Bersatu, Dr Mahathir added, would not hesitate to kick out any member or leader who still harboured the old Umno mentality of money politics, abuse of power and only used politics as a platform to obtain power and wealth.

Malaysia, he said, had the vision to make the country into a developed nation by 2020 but this could not be realised due to the greed of Malaysian leaders in the previous government.

"Now, we have changed the government and we hope to see Malaysia become a developed nation by 2025," he added.

Meanwhile, Shafie was conspicuously absent at the Bersatu's Sabah launch.

His absence as well as that of the key leaders of his state coalition partners from Sabah DAP and Upko is widely observed to be unhappiness over Bersatu's move to enter the state.

Only Sabah DAP had officially informed Bersatu that it would not be attending because the party was mourning the recent death of its state chairman Datuk Stephen Wong.

Watch the video
thestartv.com