

PM: Attacking me will only weaken Barisan

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KOTA KINABALU: Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob has reminded delegates attending the Sabah Barisan Nasional Convention here that he is the Prime Minister from the coalition and any attack against him will only weaken the leadership.

"I hope that all of us within Barisan will give their support to the government in facing the challenges.

"If we attack the government, it means it is attacking the government under Barisan's leadership because I am in the government representing Umno and Barisan," he said during a dinner in conjunction with the Sabah Barisan convention here last night.

Ismail Sabri had flown to the state to meet the delegates as he would not be able to attend the actual convention today.

"I am the Prime Minister of Barisan, not the Prime Minister of other parties. Attacking me is to weaken Barisan," he said, calling on top leaders of national and state Barisan to support him.

He told Barisan leaders and members that he needed their support to face many challenges faced by the country, including tackling rising cost of prices.

"The government is doing its best to avoid rising cost of goods to ensure that the people are not burdened. To date, the government has spent over RM70bil to check the rising cost of certain goods through subsidies," he said.

Even non-Barisan parties in the

government like Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), said Ismail Sabri, were already starting to criticise the government as the general election was drawing close.

On his non-attendance at the convention today, he said he had an official function with MTUC, which had invited him for the annual general meeting.

"MTUC was never really close to Barisan and previously under the influence of DAP. That is why I accepted MTUC's invitation and cannot come for the Sabah Barisan convention," he said.

He said he had to give an explanation as there would be all sorts of speculation on the reasons for his absence.

"When I did not attend the Umno supreme council meeting, they said that I was boycotting Umno

although I had already communicated to the Umno president that I was attending an international meeting with 17 heads of state and government leaders," he added.

Ismail Sabri said he insisted on speaking to the delegates for five minutes last night to prevent talk that the Prime Minister was prohibited from speaking at the Sabah Barisan convention.

He said it was clear that outsiders were trying to undermine and divide Barisan through all sorts of untrue speculations and issues, urging all leaders and members to close ranks and unite to prepare for the general election that could be called sooner or later.

"We must focus on fighting our opponents who are our enemies. We must all work hard now and prepare for the election."

The Star - 2/7/2022 p. 4