

Mawan Denies Any Merger Talks With SUPP
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KUCHING, Feb 23 (Bernama)-- Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP) president Tan Sri William Mawan today denied that there was any discussion between SPDP and Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) leaders on the proposed merger between the two state Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties.

He, however, said SPDP was always open to any initiative and negotiation if these could benefit BN as a whole.

"It takes two to clap (hands). Both parties must show interest. Up to now there is no initiative towards that direction from SUPP's side," he told reporters after chairing the SPDP's supreme council meeting at the party headquarters here.

The matter cropped up during the BN Fellowship Night organised by SUPP in Miri recently, when a group of SUPP veteran members from Kuching initiated the proposal to provide better services and options to Sarawakians, especially the Chinese community.

On another issue, Mawan was confident that SPDP members of parliament would be given places with the new federal cabinet reshuffle, expected to take place anytime this year.

He said SPDP would arrange for a meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to discuss the matter further as the party wanted its quota in the cabinet to be filled as soon as possible.

"The prime minister himself has informed me he will appoint one of the (SPDP) members of parliament to the cabinet. That is why we were not too demanding (on Najib) and will leave it to him to make the decision," he said.

In the 13th General Election in May last year, SPDP won four seats it contested but was not given any place in the federal cabinet.

He said the meeting today, which discussed the party's preparation to face the forthcoming state election, also supported the appointment of state Special Functions Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem as Sarawak's fifth chief minister to replace Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud.

"We in SPDP are not worried with Adenan's appointment because we are confident he can continue the state's administration well," he said.

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