

Mahathir: Umno to stay out of Sarawak

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Umno will not spread its wings to Sarawak although the party will soon make its presence felt in Sabah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He said Umno has no intention of establishing itself in Sarawak as the political situation in the State was different from that of Sabah.

Speaking to reporters after attending the MCA Chinese New Year open house at the party headquarters, Dr Mahathir said he has yet to go through the recommendations made by the National Economic Consultative Council.

When told that one of the proposals was to establish an Amanah Trust Fund for all races, the Prime Minister said he has to read the recommendations first before he could make any comments.

He was also asked to comment on the appointment of Mr Ong Ka Ting as parliamentary secretary to the Home Ministry. Dr Mahathir said the appointment was part of the Barisan Nasional concept of a Government representing the various races.

He said Mr Ong, who is from the MCA, would assist the Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob in his duties.

Bernama quotes Mr Ong as predicting that his new posting will be more challenging than his last.

But, he said that his role, which is mainly to serve the people, would remain the same.

"I am an MCA representative in the Barisan Nasional Government which works collectively in serving the people," he said.

This is the first time in many years that the Home Ministry is having a Parliamentary Secretary.

"I believe the new Ministry will be more challenging for me," he said. But, he did not foresee much problems in performing his duties in view of the "BN's policy of moderation and spirit of coalition".

Mr Ong is the MP for Pontian.