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Mahathir-officers

PM HOPES TO SEE MORE PEOPLE FROM SABAH/SARAWAK IN FED GOVT DEPTS

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KOTA KINABALU, Feb 1 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he hopes to see more people from Sabah and Sarawak serving in federal government departments.

He said this was not something impossible to achieve if all the people were sincere in wanting to make it happen.

"We hope that one day there will be more officers from Sabah and Sarawak in the federal government administration," he said at a meeting with heads of federal departments and agencies here.

He said, however, that he would not want people from Sabah serving only in the federal departments in Sabah and people from Sarawak only working with the federal departments in Sarawak.

There should be a merging of officers regardless of which state or territory they came from, he said. -- more

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"In other words, apart from having officers from the peninsula serving in Sabah or Sarawak, we also want to have more officers from Sabah and Sarawak serving in the peninsula, not only in Kuala Lumpur but also in the remote areas.

"What we want to see is an integration of all officers regardless of their place of origin," he said.

Dr Mahathir said: "When the federal government administration has reached a stage when the officers are accepted without regard for their place of origin, only then will we have succeeded in integrating our administration."

He said there was not much of a problem in providing for the desired atmosphere in the political arena, and added that this was evident from the number of politicians from Sabah and Sarawak in the Federal Cabinet.

"We also do not realise that they are from Sabah and Sarawak because they are not different from us in any way. There is integration at the political level, and now we want to have integration at the administration level," he said.

Dr Mahathir reminded federal officers and their families to be aware of the sensitivities of the local people.

"Naturally, there will be a reluctance on the part of the federal officers and the local people to approach one another but this can be overcome if they realise they are not different from each other in any way," he said.

He said it was important to know the people because once they became friends, any suspicion they might harbour would vanish.

Dr Mahathir said federal officers in Sabah were a privileged lot because they were exposed to situations different from those experienced by officers in the peninsula.

The meeting, which took almost an hour, was attended by about 100 heads and officers of federal government departments in Sabah.

Also present were Land and Cooperative Development Minister Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai and the Federal Secretary in Sabah, Datuk Samsuddin Osman.

-- Bernama

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