

# SABAH CM BY ROTATION

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Communities to  
take turns at  
the helm, says PM

KOTA KINABALU: The Chief Minister's post will be rotated among the three major communities in Sabah every two years if the Barisan Nasional comes into power in the state, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister, who is also the Barisan chairman, said a Muslim bumiputra, a non-Muslim bumiputra and a Chinese would take turns to be the chief minister.

He said the *Sabah Baru* Barisan government would be led by a Muslim, a non-Muslim Kadazan and a Chinese.

"We may arrange for the chief ministers to be replaced every two years so that each will take turns to represent interests of all the communities," he told reporters at the end of his two-day official visit to Sabah yesterday.

"This will ensure that all communities are given equal opportunities to play important roles in the government of the day and for the first time, a Chinese in Sabah might become a chief minister."

Although the proposed arrangement would not be incorporated into the state constitution, he gave an assurance that Umno would honour its promise and implement the system as soon as Barisan recaptured the state from Parti Bersatu Sabah.

"We have kept our promises in the past, like in Penang where the Chief Minister is a Gerakan member although Umno held the most seats in the state assembly," he added.

Dr Mahathir, who returned to Kuala Lumpur yesterday, said the Barisan chose the *Sabah Baru* manifesto for the Feb 18-19 State elections to bring progress and development to the state.

He said Sabah had the potential of becoming an economic power and the Barisan government will

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Dr Ling  
welcomes  
Dr M's  
proposal on  
CM's post

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ensure that Sabah was at par with other states.

"We want this message to get through to the people," Dr Mahathir said, adding that the setting up of the *Sabah Baru* government depended on Sabah voters.

He said the Barisan government found it hard to co-operate with the state government because it was led by the PBS which pulled out of the coalition at the last general election.

"We have difficulty trusting them again. And if we keep on helping them, they would claim that they can do without Barisan's co-operation," he said.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, who was also here, welcomed Dr Mahathir's proposal to rotate the chief minister's post.

"It was a very wise decision as it was in the larger interest of all ethnic groups and promotes interaction," he said.

Dr Ling told reporters after attending a luncheon with local Chinese community leaders that he was confident the rotation would not affect the continuity in the implementation of government policy but would inject impetus into it.

Earlier, he received applications to join the MCA from 200 people in Kudat.