

PM: No change to rotation system of Sabah CM's post

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The Barisan Nasional will not change its pledge on the two-year rotation of the Sabah Chief Minister's post unless the component parties in the State unanimously agree for a change of the system, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We have promised to abide by the pledge and we intend to stick by it. We will consider a change only if there is a consensus among all the component parties (for wanting a change)," he said.

"Even if one were not to agree, then it will be difficult for us to consider," he said after presenting the Golden Hand Award for

winner in the Sixth Malaysian Skills competition.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, was commenting on the proposal by the Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat Bersatu (Akar Bersatu) and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) that the Chief Minister remain until the next State elections.

On whether there was intense lobbying to get the present Chief Minister Datuk Salleh Tun Said to stay on in the post, Dr Mahathir said he did not think there was any lobbying.

"I am holding fast to the principle — the principle is that we will fulfil our (election) pledge unless there is an unanimous agreement among all the parties that

the system be changed.

"Any lobbying to get the present Chief Minister to stay on should not take place as BN does not want to be accused of going against its election pledge.

"We do not want the people to say that we promised that the Chief Minister's post be rotated to ensure a victory, but after winning (the election) go back on our word."

He added it was the coalition's decision and not the decision of the Government to rotate the post every two years.

The call for the Chief Minister to remain until the next State elections, which is held every five years, was among three resolutions

unanimously passed at the Akar Bersatu's fourth delegates' conference in Kota Kinabalu yesterday.

The resolution described the two-year rotation of the Sabah Chief Minister's post as impractical in view of the rapid development in the State.

The Barisan Nasional had in the State elections promised to rotate the Chief Minister's post among the Muslim, Kadazan and Chinese, the three main communities in Sabah, every two years.

LDP president Datuk Chong Kah Kiat said he also concurred with the Akar Bersatu's resolution that the Chief Minister's post be rotated every five years and not two years.