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Rotation

LEAVE IT TO PM IF SABAH BN CAN'T DECIDE, SAYS SALLEH

KOTA KINABALU, Jan 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will have to decide on the issue of rotating the Sabah Chief Minister's post if the Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) fails to resolve the matter, Chief Minister Datuk Salleh Said Keruak said today.

According to Salleh, Dr Mahathir had said that he was prepared to make the decision but with a clear cut undertaking that the Sabah BN leave the matter to him.

"If there is no concensus (over the rotation issue), since each component party has different views on this matter, it will be better to leave the matter to the Prime Minister for a decision," he told reporters on arrival at Kota Kinabalu International Airport old terminal here after a meeting with Dr Mahathir in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Salleh said if some of the component parties could not make up their mind whether to say "yes or no" or if they did not want to say it publicly, then it was better to leave it to the Prime Minister to decide.

Salleh, who is also Sabah Umno Liaison Committee Chairman, said he had also conveyed Sabah Umno's "firm stand" in opposing the rotation system.

"As far as Sabah Umno is concerned, I have informed both the Prime Minister and his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim of our stand. However we (Sabah Umno) are going to deliberate on the matter again this Saturday and if there is any new development, we will inform them," he said.

He said Dr Mahathir had told him that if there was any appeal or request from Sabah Umno then they should submit it through proper party channels.

The proposal to rotate the post every two years among the three main communities in Sabah -- Muslim Bumiputeras, non-Muslim Bumiputeras and Chinese

-- took another turn when the Sabah BN failed to arrive at a decision on the matter at its meeting on Jan 8.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee who chaired the meeting in his capacity as Acting Sabah BN Chairman when Salleh was on annual leave then, said that the matter was discussed but no decision was reached at the two-hour meeting.

"I have no opportunity yet to be informed by Yong on the last BN meeting but as far as I am concerned, what is more important in Sabah is political stability and Sabah BN component parties certainly must make some decision so that they can submit it to the Prime Minister," said Salleh.

Salleh said he would be meeting individually with leaders of BN component parties in Sabah during which he would convey his opinion on the matter as he felt there was no neccessity to call for another meeting of the Sabah BN.

"I have no intention to call for another meeting as the result would be the same. But if there is a necessity then I will call a meeting," he said.

Salleh said the matter would have to be resolved before his term of office, expired on March 17.

Meanwhile Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Kurup who is also Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah President said he would call a supreme council meeting next week to discuss the issue.

"Then I will convey to the Prime Minister the party's stand," he said when met at the airport after welcoming Salleh. -- BERNAMA