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Anwar-Rotation

NO MAJOR STATE CABINET RESHUFFLE FOLLOWING ROTATION, SAYS ANWAR

KOTA KINABALU, May 3 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today the rotation of the Sabah Chief Minister's post will not lead to a major state Cabinet reshuffle although there will be some changes.

"There will be proper consultation with the new Chief Minister," he told a press conference after meeting Sabah Umno leaders and other Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders separately here.

Anwar said the proposed amendments to transfer some of the Chief Minister's powers to the Cabinet would be tabled in the State Assembly as scheduled on June 17 and 18 after the appointment of the new Chief Minister.

Anwar said he listened to the BN leaders' views and explained to them the Prime Minister's decision to implement the proposal to rotate the chief ministership among the state's three major communities.

They appreciated the decision made by the leadership to rotate the post, he said.

It was announced today that Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) President Datuk Yong Teck Lee will be appointed as Sabah Chief Minister to succeed Datuk Salleh Said Keruak, who is State Umno chief, under the rotation concept.

It is learnt that one of the three state Cabinet posts allocated to SAPP will be given to Umno, which has four members in the Cabinet, including Salleh.

The proposed amendments were to have been tabled on March 25 and 26 but this was postponed when many state assemblymen asked for more time to study the bills.

The five state laws to be amended are the Forest Enactment 1968, Land Ordinance Chapter 69; Mining Ordinance 1960, Sabah Foundation Enactment 1966 and Delegation of Powers Enactment 1963.

"I explained to them that the important thing is for BN to continue ruling and that this spirit must be preserved," Anwar said.

Anwar, who is Umno Deputy President, said there should not be any undue concern that the rotation would undermine the interests of Umno and Bumiputeras.

There was no question of injustice because the new Chief Minister is also a BN leader who had to subscribe to the BN concept, he said.

Anwar said he was confident of Sabah's future because leaders of BN component parties had shown their wisdom and determination in developing the state.

Two days ago Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the rotation would be implemented without waiting for the proposed amendments to be passed by the state assembly.

During campaigning for the February 1994 state election, Dr Mahathir had pledged to rotate the post among the Muslim Bumiputeras, non-Muslim Bumiputeras and Chinese if BN came to power.

Although BN lost to Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) in the election, BN subsequently formed the state government after several PBS state assemblymen defected to its side.

Then Sabah BN Chairman Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai was appointed as the Chief Minister but he relinquished the post in December 1994 to become the Yang Dipertua Negeri and to pave the way for Salleh's appointment as the

Chief Minister.

Salleh's tenure was supposed to have ended on March 17 this year but was extended by Dr Mahathir to allow for amendments to be made to curb the powers of the Chief Minister.

-- BERNAMA

OPP YBY