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Mahathir-Post

ROTATION OF SABAH CHIEF MINISTER'S POST MAYBE EARLIER, SAYS PM

LABUAN, May 1 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the proposal to rotate the Sabah Chief Minister's post can be implemented prior to the amendments to five state legislations.

He said the proposal could be implemented without waiting for the the legislations to be amended.

The Sabah State Legislative Assembly is scheduled to sit for two-days beginning June 17 to curtail the power of the Sabah Chief Minister by transferring them to the state cabinet.

"I can't says as yet (whether the proposal will be implemented) in May but it will be carried out," he told reporters before visiting Taman Kewangan here.

Asked whether the proposal would be implemented after the the state legislative assembly approved the proposed amendments to the state legislations, he replied: "No need to wait."

However, he said no date had been fixed.

The Prime Minister had in March extended indefinitely the term of Datuk Salleh Said Keruak as Sabah Chief Minister.

Salleh's term is supposed to end on March 17 under the proposed rotation of the post which was made before the February 1994 state elections.

The proposal is to give the opportunity to each representative from the three main communities in Sabah -- Muslim Bumiputeras, Non-Muslim Bumiputeras and the Chinese -- to become the state's Chief Minister for two years.

During his visit to Sabah last year, Dr Mahathir announced that a leader from the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) would be appointed as Chief Minister once the proposed rotation was implemented.

Asked on the postponement of the April 25-26 sitting of the state legislative assembly, he said it was being discussed.

On whether he had made any suggestions on the postponement, Dr Mahathir replied: "We have not made any."

Salleh, in announcing the postponement of the sitting, had said it was to provide more time to the Barisan Nasional (BN) members of the state legislative assembly to study the proposed amendments and explain to the people the rationale of the move.

The five state legislations concerned are Forest Enactment 1968, Land Ordinance (Chapter 68), Mines Ordinance 1960, Sabah Foundation Enactment 1966 and Delegation of Power Enactment 1963.

Dr Mahathir also said he had yet to meet Salleh who was earlier reported would be meeting him to explain why the legislative assembly sitting was postponed to June 17-18. --BERNAMA

JS NMO ABG