

28 FEB 1996

Amendments

SABAH STATE AG DIRECTED TO SUBMIT REPORT ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

KOTA KINABALU, Feb 28 (Bernama) -- The Sabah state cabinet today directed the state Attorney General Datuk Stephen Foo to submit a preliminary report on the proposed amendments to the state constitution.

Chief Minister Datuk Salleh Said Keruak said no time frame was given for him to complete the report as he would need to study the amendments thoroughly with the Federal Attorney General's Chamber.

"I believe the Attorney General will need time to study all aspects of the proposed amendments," he told reporters after chairing the weekly state cabinet meeting here.

Last Saturday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad proposed that the state constitution and laws be amended to curtail the administrative powers of the Sabah Chief Minister, who was considered to have more clout than other Chief Ministers and Menteri Besar.

Dr Mahathir had said he would make a final decision on the issue of rotation of the Sabah Chief Minister's post once the amendments were made.

Salleh's term as Chief Minister, scheduled to expire on March 17, has been extended pending the Prime Minister's decision.

Salleh also said the state would study the logging quota set by the National Forestry Council (NFC) before taking steps to reduce its log production.

The NFC set a quota of three million cubic metres per year for Sabah, which industry sources said would adversely affect the state's timber processing sector.

"The government will have to study the pros and cons of the proposal before taking any action," he added.

He said the state government's revenue would be substantially reduced if the proposal was implemented.

Last week, Sabah Timber Industry Council president Datuk Andrew Tham said state government revenue would drop by more than RM300 million from RM697 million it expected to collect from the forestry sector this year. --

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