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Salleh-Resign  
SALLEH SENDS QUIT LETTER TO PM

By: Openg Onn Net

KOTA KINABALU, May 3 (Bernama) -- Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Salleh Said Keruak has submitted his resignation letter to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The undated letter was sent "sometime ago" and it was now up to Dr Mahathir to effect the resignation by informing the Sabah Yang Dipertua Negeri, said Salleh, who made the surprise announcement after he and other state Barisan Nasional leaders held a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim here.

Salleh, who is the Sabah Umno chief, said when he assumed the post in December 1994, he did so with the knowledge that he would have to give it up when the Prime Minister decided to implement his promise to rotate the chief ministership to leaders of the state's two other main communities, the Chinese and non-Muslim Bumiputeras.

Asked if submitting the letter was a pre-condition which he had to comply with, he said: "No".

"I have to do this because when I became Chief Minister, I was bound by the process (and) when the rotation of the post is implemented, I have to resign.

"I don't want allegations (that) when you have become comfortable in the job, you want to cling on to it. I don't want this to happen," said Salleh, whose term under the proposed rotation process was supposed to end on March 17.

However, he was asked to continue in the post by Dr Mahathir pending the proposed amendments to several state laws to curb the powers of the Chief Minister, especially in forestry and land matters.

The powers are to be transferred to the state Cabinet under the amendments which were to have been tabled at the State Legislative Assembly last month but the session was postponed to next month.

Salleh said the post of Chief Minister was not important to him as what he wanted was to serve the state to the best of his ability.

On his posts as BN chairman and Sabah Umno liaison chief, he said he would leave it to Dr Mahathir to decide.

Asked on his future plans, he said jokingly: "I will have to look for a job somewhere else."

However, he would continue to be Member of Parliament for Kota Belud, assemblyman for Usukan and head of Kota Belud Umno division.

Salleh said he would leave it to the party members whether he should still contest for a seat in the Umno Supreme Council during the party elections in October.

"When I decided to offer myself for the post, I was still the Sabah Umno liaison head," he explained.

Sabah Umno has endorsed Salleh and federal Minister of Land and Cooperative Development Datuk Osu Sukam, who is also the Sabah Umno deputy chief, as their official candidates for the Supreme Council election.

On the feelings of Umno members on the rotation issue, Salleh said: "We accept the decision with an open heart." -- BERNAMA

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