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Salleh-post

SMOOTH TRANSFER OF POWER IN SABAH, SAYS SALLEH

KOTA KINABALU, May 5 (Bernama) -- Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Salleh Said Keruak, who is to give up the post under a rotation scheme, gave an assurance today that there will be a smooth transfer of power.

He hoped there would be no feeling of anxiety among the people on the latest political developments in Sabah which would soon see a new Chief Minister.

"I want the transfer of power to be proper, orderly and not rushed so that stability can be maintained. I like to ensure that the transfer of power is done properly," he said at a lunch with journalists here.

Salleh said although Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had decided on his replacement, he (Salleh) was still the chief administrator for the time being.

"I shall withdraw from the post and the Prime Minister will decide on the date my resignation is to take effect," he said.

Salleh said he had sent his undated resignation letter to the Prime Minister before March 17, the last day of a two-year term for a Muslim Bumiputera to hold the post.

However, in February, Dr Mahathir extended the period of Salleh's tenure following a proposal to amend five state laws to curb the power of the Chief Minister.

Last Wednesday, Dr Mahathir confirmed that the Chief Minister's post could be rotated without waiting for the amendments to the laws to be tabled at the State Legislative Assembly meeting on June 17 and 18.

Salleh said his decision to send the resignation letter was not a pre-condition from the Prime Minister but was on his (Salleh) own initiative as he did want to be seen as being reluctant to abide by the directive on the rotation of the post.

The letter was still with the Prime Minister and would be sent to the office of the Yang Dipertua Negeri when the time came for him to resign from the post, he said.

"When the letter is in the hands of the Yang Dipertua Negeri, I will resign and all members of the state cabinet will automatically have to resign. The swearing in of the new Chief Minister and cabinet can then take place," he said.

"All this has to be done smoothly so that stability can be preserved," he said.

Salleh also called on all groups to support the new Chief Minister and his Cabinet to ensure government policies were implemented smoothly.

The people should remain calm following the latest political developments in the state, he said.

"There is still a government in Sabah, there is still a Cabinet and I am still the Chief Minister. The state government is still intact," he said.

On whether details on the proposal to amend the five state laws to curb the power of the Chief Minister ought to be made public, Salleh said it was up to the state Cabinet to decide.

"The new Chief Minister can bring up the matter for discussion by his new Cabinet," he said.

He was commenting on Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee's statement yesterday calling for the contents of the proposed amendments to be made public.

This was to allay doubts and anxiety among the public on the proposed amendments, Yong said.

Among the proposals were those related to the power of the Chief Minister with regard to forestry, land, mining and appointments to the Sabah Foundation Board of Trustees. -- BERNAMA

JS/OPP MTA SK