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Mahathir-Sabah

MAHATHIR HAPPY WITH SABAH FOREST MANAGEMENT

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he is satisfied with the progress achieved in Sabah now especially with regard to forest management.

"I notice much progress particular in forest management. The method applied can be extended to other places as well," he told reporters at an airport press conference here at the end of his two-day visit to the state.

The prime minister, accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, has already arrived in Miri on the first leg of his two-day visit to Sarawak.

Obviously referring to the reduced-impact-logging method used in the Deramakot forest reserve which he visited in Sandakan last Saturday, the prime minister said the method was effective in minimising damage caused by timber harvesting.

The prime minister said of late Sabah was also experiencing faster development especially in the state capital which had seen mushrooming of hotels and increased tourist arrivals and flight frequencies.

All these reflected the progress achieved since the state came under Barisan Nasional (BN) rule, he said.

"It's all very clear. Take Kota Kinabalu for example, there is very rapid development. We see new buildings coming up and we see bright lights. We have forgotten that not long ago the street lights in Kota Kinabalu didn't work," said Dr Mahathir.

On the rotation of the chief ministership between party leaders of state BN component parties, Dr Mahathir said the system was working smoothly.

"Its working very well, I don't see them fighting," he said.

Dr Mahathir was also asked whether the rotation system may see the appointment of a third chief minister from among a non-Muslim Bumiputera before or after the upcoming state election.

The prime minister replied that he could not ascertain such an appointment since the election date has not been fixed yet.

He said he already received a report on a dry run for the coming state general election which the Sabah BN conducted recently.

But, he said, his meeting yesterday with Sabah BN component parties did not specifically discussed the exercise.

On ways to contain the influx of foreign illegal immigrants to Sabah, he said what needed to be done was to encourage locals to do jobs now done by the foreigners.

"In Japan, for instance, despite having a large economy, the workers there are the Japanese themselves as they are willing to work in any of the sectors in their country," he added. -- BERNAMA

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