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Dompok: I will meet PM over my appointment as CM

KOTA KINABALU, Thurs. - Chief Minister designate Tan Sri Bernard Dompok said he would be meeting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad soon to discuss his appointment.

Dompok, who is Parti Demokratik Sabah president, said he was informed of his appointment by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim by telephone at 3pm.

His appointment as Chief Minister did not come as a surprise because his party has 11 State Assemblymen.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Kurup, who is president of Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah, was the other leader tipped to be appointed to the post.

He said Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee had made arrangements for the handover of the State Barisan Nasional chairmanship early next week.

Yong is to step down as Chief Minister on May 27 and Dompok will take his oath of office on May 28.

Dompok's appointment as Chief Minister is a timely present to the Kadazandusun community which celebrates the annual traditional Kaamatan Festival on May 30-31.

Describing his responsibility as Chief Minister as a heavy one, Dompok said he would continue with all existing policies and programmes of the State Government.

He said he would be shouldering a heavy burden as Sabah had not been spared the current economic problems.

"My immediate priority is to overcome the effects of the economic problems on Sabah," he told a Press conference at his office later.

With his vast experience as a member of the State Cabinet and the full co-operation of all levels of the State administration, Dompok was optimistic he would be able to carry out his tasks effectively.

Dompok also acknowledged the responsibility he had to shoulder to lead the State BN in the next State elections, due to be held next March.

He also said although he was from the Kadazandusun community, he would be fair to all communities. "When one assumes the position as State BN chairman and Chief Minister, he has to be fair to all the people in Sabah, regardless of race or religion."

But he said his appointment was a mark of respect to the non-Muslim Bumiputeras in Sabah.

Asked if he would reshuffle the Cabinet, Dompok said it was a matter which he had to discuss with other BN component parties.

Dompok, 49, began his political career in 1985 when he helped form Parti Bersatu Sabah.

He was a managing partner of Sabah Valuers before entering politics.

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