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Dr M to meet Sabah BN leaders on new CM post

Kamarul Yunus

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will meet the Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders on Thursday to discuss the appointment of a new chief minister.

Speaking to newsmen after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting in Kuala Lumpur last night, Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said he hoped a decision will be made during the meeting.

Under the rotation system implemented by the BN Government who took over the state administration in 1994, the chief minister's post is rotated every two years among the Muslim Bumiputera, non-Muslim Bumiputera and Chinese leaders.

Based on this, the next chief minister will be a non-Muslim Bumiputera. Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Kurup of Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah and Sabah Tourism and Environment Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok of Parti Demokratik Sabah are among those speculated to take over after Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee's term of office expires on May 28.

On another development, Dr Mahathir said former Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Harris Salleh was expelled from Umno because of the latter's involvement in other political parties.

"He (Harris) was expelled because Umno does not allow a member to join other political party," Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president said.

Harris, who was an Umno member since March 1991, was reported to have accepted an invitation to head Parti Bersekutu, an opposition party in Sabah.

On economics, Dr Mahathir said former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Ghafar Baba has volunteered to explain to the public the current economic problems faced by the country as well as the measures taken by the Government to overcome the problems.

"I hope the media would not interpret his (Ghafar) intention as a comeback in politics. He is doing this sincerely and not to stage a comeback, I believe him.

"In fact, he (Ghafar) has all the time to explain to the people (on the economic problems and action taken)," he said, adding Umno will arrange meetings for Ghafar to explain to the public.

Dr Mahathir said although the current economic problems took centre stage at the discussion among supreme council members last night, he would not reveal what transpires at the meeting because he will be meeting all the editors of major newspapers today.

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