

27 NOV 1998

Mahathir-Cabinet

DR MAHATHIR MEETS SABAH CABINET MINISTERS

KOTA KINABALU, Nov 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad began his two-day official visit to Sabah today with a meeting with State Cabinet Ministers.

The closed door meeting, which was held soon after his arrival here, lasted about an hour.

Except for Minister in the Chief Minister's Department Datuk Yong Teck Lee who is still undergoing medical treatment in Singapore, all cabinet ministers headed by Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, attended the meeting.

The Prime Minister later accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Osu Sukam joined Sabah Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Haji Sakaran bin Dandai and the people for Friday prayerse at the State Mosque here.

Asked later what was discussed at the meeting, Chief Minister Dompok said among other things the state cabinet had voiced its support for the Prime Minister on the policies the country had adopted to combat the present economic woes.

"The state cabinet wanted an opportunity to have this session with the Prime Minister and as head of the State Cabinet, I voiced the cabinet's support for the PM on the economic policy as well as in the political arena which saw people form outside the country seeming to want to have a say in how things are run in Malaysia," he said.

On whether the discussions touched on the impending state elections, Dompok said, it was discussed but "not very much".

"I think the (state) government wants to put more emphasis on solving the economic problems," he said.

Dompok said they also discussed issues like infrastructure development, water supply and projects in rural areas as well as several requests by the state's tourism industry.

"I also brought attention to our quest for development of Sabah's tourism industry taking advantage of its natural resources. We want to promote the state as a place to go for a holiday and in the process assist the nation in getting foreign exchange," the Chief Minister said.

Later, Dr Mahathir met representatives of the Sabah Council of Churches (SCC) led by its president Datuk Bishop Yong Ping Chung.

"It's a positive discussion. His (Dr Mahathir) concern is the same. He hasn't changed...", Yong told reporters later.

He said the prime minister urged all Sabahans regardless of religion to unite for the good of the country.

"In the meeting, we expressed our gratitude to the state government for granting annual grant to non-Muslim denominations and also its strong stand on gambling," Yong added.

-- BERNAMA

NT rn