

08 MAY 1998

Yong-Post

NEW CHIEF MINISTER MUST BE A LEADER FOR EVERYONE- YONG

KOTA KINABALU, May 8 (Bernama) -- Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee said today his successor who will also be the new Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) Chairman must be a leader for all.

Echoing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement yesterday that the new Chief Minister and Sabah BN Chairman must be supported and accepted by everyone, Yong said the new leader should also be able to look after everyone irrespective of party affiliations.

"The same concept must apply just like during the administration of Tun Sakaran Dandai, Datuk Salleh Said Keruak and mine," he told a 36-member delegation from the Badan Amal dan Kebajikan Isteri Wakil Rakyat Sabah (Bakisa) which called on him at his office, here.

Dr Mahathir was expected to announce the name of the new Chief Minister yesterday but the BN Chairman said he would do so on his return from Cairo.

Among leaders said to be potential candidates for the post were the current Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Kurup and President of Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS) and Tan Sri Bernard Dompok who is Tourism and Environmental Minister and President of Parti Demokratik Sabah (PDS).

Yong said it was vital to uphold the concept of "leader for everyone" in the rotation system to erase fears that change in the leadership would cause major upsets and disorders.

"We have found that this has not been the case and such fears have been unfounded. There were just minor changes in personality and leadership style but the role and responsibility remain unchanged," said Yong, whose current term expires end of this month.

Yong also gave the assurance that when the time came, there would be a smooth handover of duties to the new Chief Minister while he himself would continue to contribute positively.

The system was mooted by Dr Mahathir days before the 1994 state election to give leaders from the three main communities in Sabah -- Muslim Bumiputera, Chinese and non-Muslim Bumiputera -- a chance to lead the state government peacefully for two years each.

-- BERNAMA

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