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New CM: Decision soon

KOTA KINABALU, Sat. - Barisan Nasional secretary-general Datuk Seri Mohamed Rahmat today said a decision will soon be made on the new Sabah Chief Minister to replace Datuk Yong Teck Lee whose term ends this month.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would make his decision soon.

"It is important that the decision made by Dr Mahathir is accepted as a good decision by all in the BN," he said, adding that BN component parties should be united.

Under the rotation system implemented after the BN Government took over the State in 1994, the Chief Minister's post is held in turn by the Muslim Bumiputera, non-Muslim Bumiputera and the Chinese leaders.

The next Chief Minister will be a non-Muslim Bumiputera.

Mohamed, who is also Information Minister, was speaking to reporters after launching the State-level Radio and Television Malaysia's 52nd anniversary celebrations.

"We will fulfil our promise to rotate the Chief Minister's post among the Muslim Bumiputera, non-Muslim Bumiputera and the Chinese," he said.

Mohamed also said he was confident that the people in Sabah would continue to support the BN.

On the emergence of the new Parti Bersekutu, Mohamed said BN would not accept any new parties into its fold.

"If Bersekutu thinks that it can win the next election and applies to enter BN, we will not accept it. The same goes for Parti Bersatu Sabah," he said.

He also denied rumours about Federal leaders backing Parti Bersekutu.

"If there are any statements from Bersekutu saying so, it is a lie and a ploy to get the people's support. How can we bring down our own Government... it is impossible," he said.

He also said Parti Bersekutu's president and former Chief Minister Datuk Harris Salleh should declare whether he was still an Umno member or not.

"He must declare to the people of Sabah whether he is still an Umno member or not. If he does not resign, we will expel him."

(END)