

16/08/1998

Dr M: CM rotation system to stay

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KOTA KINABALU, Sat. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the rotation of the Chief Minister's post among the three main communities in Sabah would go on until the Sabah people themselves decided it should be done away with.

The Prime Minister said as it was, the two-year rotation system was well accepted by all the State BN component parties as well as the people of Sabah.

He was speaking at a Press conference at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport before returning to Kuala Lumpur.

Asked for his observation on the level of co-operation among component parties since the rotation system was introduced in March 1994, Dr Mahathir, who is also the BN chairman, said it was good.

Under the system, the Chief Minister's post is rotated among leaders of the Muslim Bumiputera, non-Muslim Bumiputera and Chinese communities.

Currently, the post is held by Parti Demokratik Sabah president Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, for the non-Muslim Bumiputera.

Tun Sakaran Dandai, who represented Umno, was the first Chief Minister under the rotation system.

He was sworn in as the Yang di-Pertua Negeri in 1995 and the post was handed over to Datuk Salleh Tun Said, also of Umno.

Both represented the Muslim Bumiputera.

In 1996, Datuk Yong Teck Lee became the Chief Minister, representing the Chinese. Dompok took over in May this year.

Asked if his two-day visit was to solve any problem in the Sabah BN, Dr Mahathir said he was here to brief the component party leaders on the economic problems.

On when the State elections would be held, he said it could be any time between now and March next year (when the present five-year term of the State Legislative Assembly expires).

Asked if the BN was ready to face the people for a fresh mandate, he said it was ready and that component parties could submit proposals on the choice of candidates for the State elections, but he would decide.

Also present at the Press conference were Dompok, who is Sabah BN chairman, Deputy Chief Minister and Sabah Umno chief Datuk Osu Sukam and Liberal Democratic Party president Datuk Chong Kah Kiat.

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