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Continue rotation system for CM's post, says PDS

PENAMPANG, Fri. - Kadazandusun-based Parti Demokratik Sabah wants the rotation system for the Chief Minister's post to be continued.

Its president and former Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok said it must be remembered that the system was given prominence in the BN election manifesto.

"I stand by the manifesto of the Barisan Nasional," Dompok told a news conference after announcing his decision not to quit politics at his residence last night.

He had declared prior to the March 12-13 State election that he would quit politics if he failed to defend the Moyog seat.

Dompok, who was in the 10th month of a two-year term as Chief Minister, lost to Datuk Clarence Bongkos Malakun of Parti Bersatu Sabah by 4,388 votes.

Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had recently said that it was up to the people of Sabah to decide whether or not the rotation system should continue.

Following the statement, several State BN leaders had said they were in favour of scrapping the system.

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

When the BN took over the State Government in April 1994, the first to be appointed Chief Minister was Tun Sakaran Dandai who was succeeded by Datuk Salleh Tun Said when the former was made Yang di Pertua Negeri in December 1994.

After Salleh completed the Muslim-Bumiputera two-year term, Datuk Yong Teck Lee, who is Sabah Progressive Party president, was appointed Chief Minister as the Chinese quota.

Dompok took over from Yong in May last year.

Sabah Umno chief Datuk Osu Sukam was appointed Chief Minister after the State election last month although a non-Muslim Bumiputera was supposed to complete the remaining 14 months of Dompok's two-year term.

The rationale was that the three non-Muslim Bumiputeras - Datuk Wences Anggang (Kuala Penyu), Datuk Rubin Balang (Tenom) and Datuk Siringan Gubat (Ranau) - who won in the election lacked the experience to assume the post.

The BN leadership had given an undertaking that a non-Muslim Bumiputera would complete Dompok's 14-month tenure after Osu completed his two-year term.

On the proposed merger of the three Kadazandusun-based BN component parties - the PDS, Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah and Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat - Dompok said such an issue should not be discussed in the newspapers.

"I have said some years ago that such a matter should first be discussed among ourselves behind closed doors."

Leaders of PBRS and Akar had said their parties were prepared to discuss a merger.

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