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Sabah-Rotation

NO ROTATION SYSTEM ELSEWHERE, SAYS MAHATHIR

KOTA KINABALU, March 6 (Bernama) -- The rotation system of chief ministership in Sabah won't be implemented elsewhere in the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said there would not be a nationwide system of rotating the post between leaders from various communities like in Sabah because " the situation in Sabah is planned for Sabah (only)".

Under the rotation system introduced when the Barisan Nasional (BN) came to power in 1994, the chief minister's post is rotated among party leaders of three major racial groups, Muslim Bumiputeras, Chinese and non-Muslim Bumiputeras.

He told a news conference here that the situation in Pulau Pinang where Umno does not hold the chief ministership despite commanding a majority in the State Legislative Assembly among BN component parties is also designed only for Pulau Pinang.

" For the whole country...in any case, the constitution does not prevent a non-Malay from becoming the prime minister of Malaysia.

He said because of Umno's strength and being in the majority, there was no need for rotation for the central government.

" Besides, the central government doesn't lend itself to rotation, we need continuity. State government is alright because continuity is at the federal level," he said.

A reporter had asked the prime minister to comment on dissatisfaction among "most Umno members" in Sabah about the rotation system.

The state BN held 43 of the 48 seats in the State Legislative Assembly that was dissolved on Feb 22 for the March 12-13 state election. Of this, Umno had 21, Parti Demokratik Sabah 11, Sabah Progressive Party five, Akar three, Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah two and MCA one. The other four were held by Parti Bersatu Sabah and one independent.

" There is always dissatisfaction but Umno is a very practical party. We could have been dissatisfied for example with the Chinese chief minister for Pulau Pinang but we have taken the thing overall for the whole country.

" So, there are places we have to do certain thing, other places do other things but we in Umno, leaders of Umno are satisfied," he said.

The prime minister said the rotation in Sabah could continue even though the majority of the people here are Malay-Muslims.

-- BERNAMA

AU/JS TS