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Mahathir-Rotation

BN CAN DECIDE WHETHER TO GO ON WITH THE ROTATION SYSTEM, SAYS PM

KOTA KINABALU, July 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the wishes of the people of Sabah pertaining to the rotation of the chief minister's post will have to be resolved within the Barisan Nasional (BN).

"Basically it is a BN affair so they can decide upon it within the BN," he told a news conference, here, at the end of his three-day visit to Sabah.

The BN chairman, however, reiterated that it was up to the Sabah people whether or not they wanted the system to continue.

"As far as I am concerned, I am prepared to accept whatever the wishes of the people of Sabah," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that although he was the one who suggested the system, it was the people who would have the final say.

"It is true that I suggested it. Had there been opposition to it, there should be opposition then but nobody opposed it...obviously everybody accepted it. Now, if I say 'stop', the people might protest," he said.

The system was introduced in Sabah in 1994 to enable leaders from the three main communities -- Muslim bumiputeras, Chinese and non-Muslim bumiputeras -- to become the chief minister on a rotational basis every two years.

Those who have been appointed as chief minister under the system are Tun Sakaran Dandai (now the Yang Dipertua Negeri), Datuk Salleh Tun Said, Datuk Yong Teck Lee, Tan Sri Bernard Dompok and the current chief minister Datuk Osu Sukam.

If the system continues, Osu's term will expire in May next year, after which a leader from the non-muslim bumiputeras will be appointed to continue the unfinished tenure of Dompok's chief ministership.

Dompok was chief minister for only 11 months before the state election was called last year. He lost his seat in the election and Osu was appointed to the post.

-- BERNAMA

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