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'Up to Sabahans to decide on rotation system'

KOTA KINABALU, Tues. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today it was up to the people of Sabah to decide whether the rotation system for the Chief Minister's post should be maintained.

The Prime Minister said as Malaysia was a democratic country, the decision of the majority would be respected.

"If the Chief Minister comes from one race and the others are willing to accept him, then it is fine.

"But if it causes racial problems, then we cannot maintain it," he said.

He said this during a dialogue with the students and staff of the Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

He had earlier opened the university's main campus.

The Sabah Chief Minister's post is rotated among the three main races in Sabah - Malay, Kadazandusun and Chinese.

The decision to rotate the post was a compromise made during the 1994 State election when the Barisan Nasional took over the State administration from Parti Bersatu Sabah following defections to the BN by several PBS State Assemblymen.

With obvious reference to the PBS, Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman and Umno president, said when a party which was monopolised by a single race had ruled Sabah, the people did not benefit from development projects.

"There was no university and no street lights," he said.

Under the BN, however, the Government managed to bring many development projects in Sabah, including the university which was promised by Dr Mahathir during the 1994 State election.

Fielding questions from the floor, he also said Malaysia was more democratic than certain other countries which claimed to be greater proponents of democracy.

He said in Malaysia, the rights of the majority carried greater weight than the rights of the minority.

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