

Sabah Barisan expects Dr M's decision today

STAR

By MUGUNTAN VANAR

KOTA KINABALU A decision on the system of rotating the Sabah chief minister is anticipated after Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's series of meetings with Sabah Barisan Nasional today.

The Sabah Barisan leaders expect the Prime Minister to tell them if he will scrap or keep the rotation of the chief minister among the Muslims, Chinese and Kadazandusuns.

Several of the leaders who departed for Kuala Lumpur yesterday will also attend a Barisan supreme council meeting after meeting Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to meet all 20 Sabah Umno division chiefs led by Datuk Osu Sukam at Umno headquarters in Putra World Trade Centre.

Sabah based Barisan leaders comprising Osu of Umno Tan Sri Joseph Kurup (PBRS), Tan Sri Bernard Dompok (Parti Upko), Datuk Yong Teck Lee (SAPP), Datuk Chong Kah Kiat (LDP) and Datuk Pandikar Amin (Akar) are slotted to meet Dr Mahathir after that.

This will be followed by the Barisan supreme council meeting attended by all 14 member parties.

Osu's term for the Muslim bumiputras under the two year rotation system ends on Sunday and if the Barisan rotation system continues a leader from either the Chinese or non Muslim bumiputra communities will take over.

Speculation has been rife on the Prime Minister's decision since he described the rotation system he introduced in 1994 as producing lame duck

chief ministers.

All the Sabah Barisan leaders have written in their views on the rotation after having failed to reach a consensus whether to scrap it, keep it or modify the power sharing formula.

At least three of the Sabah Barisan parties wanted the rotation continued for this assembly term.

There has been speculation on various formulas in the political grapevine with some expecting Osu's term to be extended for another two months before Dr Mahathir announces his decision.

Others believe that Dr Mahathir may just keep the rotation system and appoint a Chinese or a Kadazandusun representative while a couple of politicians think the rotation period may be lengthened to a five year term instead of two.