

# Sabah STAR 28 AUG 2001 Umno accepts formula

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah Umno has accepted the new formula for the rotation of the chief minister's post among the state's three main communities, its information chief Datuk Karim Ghani said yesterday.

"We may not fully agree with the rotation system but we accept it," he said.

Karim said Sabah Umno had consistently maintained the view that the chief minister should be the one who had the majority support of members in the state assembly.

On Sunday, Sabah Progressive Party president Datuk Yong Teck Lee said the state Barisan Nasional must make its stand known on the rotation system well before the next state elections, due in 2004.

He said Sabah Barisan must decide whether to continue with the existing rotation system or come up with a new formula before the term of present Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat ended in two years.

Yong said any uneasiness among Sabah Barisan parties on the new rotation system formula as announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last March must be sorted out before the state polls so that the people would not perceive the coalition with suspicion.

The rotation system implement-

ed since Barisan came into power in Sabah in 1994 saw a representative of the Muslim bumiputras, Chinese and non-Muslim bumiputras taking turns of two years each for the chief ministership.

However, Dr Mahathir announced the 2:1:1 formula for the rotation system, which meant that after Chong, who is from Liberal Democratic Party, ended his term, the post would again go back to Umno.

A non-Muslim bumiputra would take over after two years, followed by Umno again, Chinese and so on.

Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah president Tan Sri Joseph Kurup said the Sabah political situation could change, therefore an early decision on the rotation must be made.