

Sabah BN component party leaders meet PM

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Mahathir given mandate to decide on CM's rotation system

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PUTRAJAYA, Wed: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad met Sabah-based Barisan Nasional component party leaders individually today to discuss the rotation system for the Sabah chief minister's post.

The meeting follows Mahathir's recent visit to the state where he met Sabah Umno leaders only and later invited other BN component party leaders to the federal capital to discuss the issue.

United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko) president Tan Sri Bernard Dompok was the first to meet Mahathir at his office at 2pm.

He was followed by Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) president Datuk Chong Kah

Kiat, who is the Sabah tourism, development, environment, science and technology minister.

The others who met Mahathir were Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS) presi-

dent Tan Sri Joseph Kurup, who is a former deputy chief minister, Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) president Datuk Yong Teck Lee, a former chief minister, and Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat (Akar) president Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia, who is minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Osu Sukam arrived at the prime minister's office at 4.45pm for the meeting and left at 6.40pm.

Met outside the office, Osu said the meeting was a working visit and a follow-up to the prime minister's visit to the state last week.

Asked whether any consensus or decision was reached during the meeting, he replied: "You have to ask the prime minister."

He said Sabah Umno had given a full mandate to Mahathir to make a decision.

"We have given the prime

minister the mandate to decide on the matter," he said.

On whether a final meeting will be held before the announcement, he said it was up to Mahathir.

The other Sabah BN component party leaders refused to meet reporters.

Osu's two-year term under the system, where the chief minister's post is rotated among the Muslim bumiputra, non-Muslim bumiputra and the Chinese community, expires on March 13.

The system, proposed by Mahathir during the 1994 state election campaign, was implemented when BN took over the state administration in March that year.

The unique system is to enable the leaders of the three major communities in Sabah to head the government for a two-year term each.