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Mahathir-Rotation

DECISION WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION PEOPLE'S INTEREST, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathair Mohamad will take into consideration the interest of the people of Sabah and the development of the state in deciding whether to continue or discontinue with the system of rotation for the post of Sabah chief minister.

The other criteria would be the interest of the Barisan Nasional (BN) and that of the component parties.

The Prime Minister said he is still waiting for full reports in writing from BN component party leaders in Sabah on the matter.

"I will make a decision (on the rotation system) as soon as possible," he told a news conference after chairing the Umno Supreme Council (MT) meeting at the Umno Headquarters here today.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the BN chairman, however did not say whether the decision would be made before the end of the term of Datuk Osu Sukam, the present chief minister of Sabah.

"His swearing-in (as chief minister) was not limited to two years. Even if it exceeds a bit, it will not be a problem," he said.

Osu's two-year term ends on March 18 according to the rotation system.

Dr Mahathir, who has met all Sabah BN component party leaders, has also asked them to submit in writing their views on the rotation system.

They had given Dr Mahathir the mandate to make a decision on the rotation system which he proposed during the 1994 Sabah election campaign. It was implemented when the 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 -- Muslim bumiputera, Chinese and non-Muslim bumiputera -- to head the state government for a term of two years each.

Its implementation ran smoothly initially but lately several quarters have called for the system to be abolished while the Sabah BN component party leaders are leaving it to the prime minister to make a decision.

The Sabah BN component parties are Umno, Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP), United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (UPKO), Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS), Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat Sabah (Akar) and Liberal Democratic Party Sabah (LDP).

Last month, Dr Mahathir when asked about his views on the rotation system said the rotation system had produced "lame duck" chief ministers.

He said that changing the chief minister every two years, as being the practised, could lead to an ineffective government.

-- BERNAMA

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