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Early meeting with PM for Sabah leaders

Joniston Bangkuai

KOTA KINABALU, Thurs. - All heads of Sabah-based Barisan Nasional component members left for Kuala Lumpur today to attend a BN meeting amid talks that a decision is expected to be made on the Sabah Chief Ministership rotation system at the meeting.

The meeting, to be held tomorrow morning, would be chaired by BN chairman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Liberal Democratic Party president Datuk Chong Kah Kiat said the Prime Minister would have a separate meeting with Sabah-based BN component party leaders before the start of the main BN meeting.

"But I do not know what will be discussed as there is no specific agenda (for the separate meeting with Sabah-based BN component parties)," he said before leaving for Kuala Lumpur this afternoon.

Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah secretary-general Louis Rampas, already in Kuala Lumpur when contacted, said the possibility of the rotation issue being raised at the meeting could not be ruled out.

Rampas would be attending the meeting with PBRS president Tan Sri Joseph Kurup.

Sabah Progressive Party secretary-general Richard Yong said he was not aware if the rotation issue would be discussed at the meeting.

"I was told the rotation issue is not on the agenda, but it might be raised at the meeting," Yong said.

He said SAPP president Datuk Yong Teck Lee and deputy president Datuk Tham Nyip Shen left for Kuala Lumpur this afternoon.

Besides, PBRS, SAPP and LDP, the other Sabah-based BN component party are United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun-Murut Organisation (Upko) and Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat (Akar).

Upko is headed by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, while Akar is headed by Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia, who is also Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Chief Minister Datuk Osu Sukam had said yesterday he would carry on as usual until further instruction from the Prime Minister.

Osu, whose two-year tenure as Chief Minister ends today, was sworn in as Sabah's ninth Chief Minister on March 15, 1999, after the BN won 31 of the 48 State seats in the State election.

The Prime Minister had late last month met with Osu, who is Sabah Umno chief, and the heads of all the Sabah-based BN component members to get their views on the rotation.

Dr Mahathir had asked the respective heads of the Sabah-based BN component members to submit a written report to him on the matter.