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Mahathir-Sabah

MAHATHIR SAYS CRITICISM AGAINST ROTATION SYSTEM EXPECTED

KUALA LUMPUR, March 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he is not surprised by the Sabah opposition's claim that the rotation system for the chief minister's post is not in favour of non-Muslim Bumiputeras.

"What do you expect the opposition to say? You cannot expect them to say this is a great thing. Do you expect them to say this is a great thing?," he asked.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on a statement by Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) deputy president Dr Maximus Ongkili who said the exclusion of a Kadazandusun representative for the next four years "brought about an unkind assessment of the leaders of the community as a whole".

Speaking to reporters after opening a seminar on "Integrity In Business - The Way Forward" at Nikko Hotel here, Dr Mahathir said even if Barisan Nasional (BN) had abolished the rotation system, it would still be criticised by the opposition.

"They will say, see they don't keep their promises," he said.

Last Friday, Dr Mahathir, who announced the appointment of Datuk Chong Kah Kiat as the new Sabah Chief Minister, said the rotation system would continue with minor changes.

The changes would see Umno, the dominant party in the Sabah BN, holding the chief minister's post twice or four years, under the rotation system instead of two years.

The other components parties would get to hold the post once or two years in each rotation or cycle.

Under the original arrangement, leaders of the three major communities in Sabah -- Muslim Bumiputera, Chinese and non-Muslim Bumiputera would head the state government for a term of two years each.

Dr Mahathir, who is the BN chairman, said when the BN decided to maintain the system, the opposition, as expected, described it as a very bad system.

The Prime Minister said he was not perturbed with such criticisms as it has become a norm for opposition parties in the country to condemn whatever initiative or programmes undertaken by the ruling party.

-- BERNAMA

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