

14 MAR 2001

Osu-CM

OSU TO GO ABOUT DUTIES AS USUAL UNTIL FURTHER INSTRUCTION

KOTA KINABALU, March 14 (Bernama) -- Datuk Osu Sukam whose two-year tenure as chief minister ends on Sunday said today he would continue with his duties as usual until further instruction.

Asked whether he had received any instruction from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the possibility of him continuing as chief minister until a decision was made on the rotation system, he merely said: "You'll have to wait until further instruction."

Under the rotation system, Osu's term as chief minister ends on March 18.

Osu was speaking to reporters after chairing the weekly state Cabinet meeting.

To a question on whether today's Cabinet meeting would be the last to be chaired by him, Osu said jokingly: "Maybe...probably I'll also meet you all next week and subsequent weeks."

The unique rotation system which provides an opportunity to leaders of the three major communities in Sabah to become chief minister for two years was implemented when the Barisan Nasional (BN) came to power in the state on March 17, 1994.

The system started with the appointment of Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai (now Tun) who represented the Muslim Bumiputeras and was succeeded by Datuk Salleh Tun Said when Sakaran became the Yang di-Pertua Negeri.

Salleh was replaced by Datuk Yong Teck Lee who represented the Chinese and later passed on to the non-Muslim Bumiputera community represented by Tan Sri Bernard Dompok who served in the post for about a year.

Osu was appointed chief minister when Dompok lost in the March 12-13 state election in 1999.

All five Sabah-based BN component party leaders had forwarded their views in writing to Dr Mahathir to enable him to make a decision on the future of the rotation system.

-- BERNAMA

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