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Mahathir-Sabah

ROTATING SYSTEM NURTURES LAME DUCK CHIEF MINISTERS, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said one of the weaknesses of the rotating leadership in Sabah is that it tends to create a series of "lame duck" chief ministers.

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

"Although we can still live with such weakness, we have to take into account how to overcome this +lame duck+ problem," he said.

Dr Mahathir was responding to questions raised on the matter at a press conference after launching the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy for K-economy assembly at Putra Stadium in Bukit Jalil, near here, today.

He said the situation was not unlike that in the United States where a president who was into his second term of office was considered a lame duck leader of the country.

"The people do not care much with what he does as they are just waiting for him to be replaced by someone else," he said when asked about his meetings with several key leaders of Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties on Wednesday over the selection of the new chief minister.

Dr Mahathir said he was awaiting the leaders' views on the matter in black and white.

He said: "It is meaningless for us to just meet without searching for a solution. If we merely want to continue with the present set up, then that is not a solution to the problem. We are looking for ways to settle all problems."

Dr Mahathir met at his office last Wednesday presidents of Sabah BN component parties namely Tan Sri Bernard Dompok (Upko), Datuk Chong Kah Kiat (LDP), Tan Sri Joseph Kurup (PBRS), Datuk Yong Teck Lee (SAPP), Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia (Akar) and Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Osu Haji Sukam who is also state Umno liaison committee chief.

The prime minister said while all of them gave him the mandate to decide on rotating chief ministership, they also conveyed their personal views on the matter.

"They do not totally leave it to me. They also state their terms. On top of that the also give me their mandate," he said.

While several quarters in Sabah reportedly wanted the rotation system to be abolished, some argued that it should be maintained.

It was introduced in 1994 to allow Muslim Bumiputera, non-Muslim Bumiputera and Chinese leaders in Sabah to take turn to be chief minister.

Osu's two-year tenure as chief minister representing the Muslim Bumiputeras expires middle of next month.

-- BERNAMA

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