

14 FEB 2001

Karim-Rotation

SABAH BN COMPONENT MEMBERS MUST ACCEPT PM'S DECISION

KOTA KINABALU, Feb 14 (Bernama) -- All members of the Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties must accept whatever decision made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the system of rotation for post of the Sabah chief minister, Sabah BN secretary Datuk Karim Bujang said today.

He said this is important to maintain political stability and unity among the various communities in Sabah.

"I feel that since we have given the PM the mandate...we we should respect his decision.

"We don't want certain groups to take advantage of the situation to raise issues that could jeopardise unity and stability we have enjoyed since the BN was returned to power again in 1994," he told Bernama, here.

Karim, who is also the Assistant Minister for Finance, said the first rotation went smoothly while the current debate was on the second rotation of the system.

All leaders of the Sabah BN component parties have agreed to leave it the Prime Minister to decide.

"So, when a decision is made...we must accept it with an open heart and work together towards further strengthening the BN in Sabah.

"We don't want to say okay in public but differently in private," said Karim.

Last Monday, Dr Mahathir said he would meet Sabah BN component party leaders to hear their views on the rotation system before he decided on the matter.

The system was proposed by Dr Mahathir during the 1994 state election campaign and was implemented when the BN took over the state administration in March that year.

The unique system is to enable 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.

The implementation ran smoothly initially, but lately several quarters have called for the system to be abolished, while others are leaving it Dr Mahathir to make a decision.

-- BERNAMA

NT ABG