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Mahathir-Rotation

SAPP CAN SUBMIT PROPOSAL ON ROTATION SYSTEM, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) can submit its proposal pertaining to the system of rotation for the Sabah chief minister's post to the Barisan Nasional (BN) at national level.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said that the biggest party in the state, Umno, was given preference but the SAPP could submit its proposal if it wants any party to be given the post.

"I do not know whether they have agreed to conduct a review. They can conduct a review but we (BN) have modified it (rotation system) in view of the fact that Umno is the biggest party and play a very significant role in Sabah.

"Even though we have a rotation system, it is unlike before. This Chinese party now holds the post, then Umno, then the Kadazan (party) and then Umno again," he told a news conference after delivering his keynote address at the Seventh Conference of Ministers of Endowment and Islamic Affairs here.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, was asked to comment on a statement by SAPP president Datuk Yong Teck Lee last Sunday that the BN must decide before the next state election whether to continue with the rotation system or to replace it with a new formula.

The rotation system was introduced when the BN took over the helm of the state government in March 1994 to enable leaders of the Muslim Bumiputera, Chinese and non-Muslim Bumiputera communities to assume the post of chief minister for a two-year term each.

Slight modifications were made last year when Datuk Chong Kah Kiat assumed the post.

Under the new format, the post will still be rotated every two years but Umno leaders will take turns to hold the post with leaders of the two other communities.

For example, on expiry of the term of the leader of the Chinese party next March, the post will be assumed by an Umno leader who will be replaced by a leader from the non-Muslim Bumiputera community and on expiry of his term, it will again be assumed by an Umno leader.

Sabah Umno liaison chairman Datuk Musa Aman said at the same function that they should discuss the matter because any move that would benefit the people would be considered.

Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, president of another BN component party in the state, United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation, said that it was a good idea to discuss the rotation system.

-- BERNAMA

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