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Utusan Malaysia calls for abolition of rotation system for CM in Sabah

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UTUSAN Malaysia has called for the scrapping of the rotation system of the Sabah Chief Minister's post, proposing that an Umno leader be given the right to lead the State as the party forms the backbone of the Government.

The paper's stand followed a debate on the pros and cons of retaining the system, introduced several years ago when Barisan Nasional took over the State from the Opposition.

Utusan's columnist Awang Selamat, who touched on the issue in his Bisik-Bisik column, said it was evident that many State leaders favoured the abolishment of the system where leaders from Sabah BN component parties are appointed Chief Minister for a two-year period on a rotation basis.

Awang argued that when the system was introduced, it was deemed effective because of the political situation and equation in the State then.

"But now the situation has changed."

He said rotating the post was counter-productive as it did not give the Chief Minister much time to plan, let alone implement his policies or programmes.

"No one can give their full commitment when they know they will be replaced in two years."

Awang said Umno deserved the Chief Minister's post as the party had performed well in the election.

He said the other parties ought to be given positions according to the support they received.

Meanwhile, Berita Harian reported that a special counter would be set up at the Malaysian High Commission in Singapore for motorists from the republic to settle their outstanding traffic summonses.

The counter would be operational from next year.

Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Bakri Omar said police would be co-operating with the republic's registrar of vehicles to trace motorists who have not settled some 250,000 summonses.

About 70 per cent of the summonses were for speeding while visiting the country.

The Road Transport Department recently adopted a new measure in dealing with Singaporean motorists with outstanding summonses - they are not allowed to leave Malaysia until they had paid up.

In another story, Utusan reported that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would be visiting the nine Asean countries next month.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar was quoted as saying that it was common for a new Asean head of government to visit other countries in the region.

The visits were also aimed at enhancing bilateral ties, Syed Hamid added.

The trips would be the first for Abdullah since taking over as Prime Minister from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 31.