

Taib Mahmud will be advisor after he quits
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Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud today hinted that he will be around to play the role of advisor even after resigning from his long tenure.

In an interview aired by Media Prime channels, Astro Awani and AEC during their 8pm news programmes tonight, the chief minister of thirty years said that he does not want to resign too late as he still wants to be of assistance to his successor.

"I'm now pushing 75 and I don't want to retire when I am bertongkat (too old) that I cannot guarantee my successor assistance to ensure that the momentum for development is maintained.

"(If I am too old my successor) will not receive help to sort out issues within the party and to build a team which can work together to ensure that all policies are implemented smoothly," he said.

In the interview, edited to last about 10 minutes long, Taib added that the most important thing for him is to ensure that the Sarawak Corridor of Renewal Energy (SCORE) is fully utilised and that his strategies for development is shared with his successor.

The interview is part of a media blitz to counter the opposition's persistent attacks on his long tenure, which has even prompted Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to repeatedly assure Sarawakians that Taib is on his way out.

Blitz on BN-linked media

The media blitz, which also includes articles in national newswire Bernama, came on the same day as a cyber attack disabling news portal Malaysiakini, as well as persistent attacks on whistleblower website Sarawak Report.

While he claimed to have chosen his successor, Taib, who did not name the man, admitted that this person will not be able to govern the way he has.

"I have to make sure that the person who takes over can work in a team. That's the first thing. He cannot work like me, the age gap is too big.

"My government faced a crisis in 1987 and many of my peers went against me and left the party and my followers were the young ones," he said, referring the coup attempt popularly dubbed the Ming Court Affair.

Taib also claimed to have chosen the line up of BN candidates mostly among those in their late thirties or early forties, whom he believed will be able to work with and support this mysterious chosen successor.

"I choose the new faces (as) these people can see eye to eye with the new leadership that will come after me, they are well qualified but lack experience, so I have chosen them so they can lead for a long time," he said.

He added that he will also ensure that there is buy-in from the more senior leaders of Sarawak BN as he wants his successor to be able to "support and advise" the new chief minister.

"We have guidelines (for succession). If need be, we can form a small caucus and vote on who we feel should be number one. It is a mechanism used when there is no consensus among the top leadership. The number one must have the support of those who rose before him," he said.

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