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PM to bring it up at Cabinet

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Pak Lah also wants top priority for illegal immigrant issue in Sabah

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ministry for Sabah and Sarawak.

On the issue of Cabinet representation, Abdullah said: "They would like to see more ministers. I said I'm looking into it but it may take some time.

"The request has merit. I do recognise (that). This also applies to Sarawak," he told a press conference after holding a marathon eight-hour meeting with state Barisan leaders which began at 11am.

Various Sabah leaders have voiced dissatisfaction with the number of ministers from the state.

On the closing of the department, Abdullah said the call was valid as it hindered the implementation of projects.

"I will bring it up at the Cabinet on Wednesday and discuss the matter as it involves various agencies," he said.

He added that the state felt that federal development could be carried out through state agencies.

As for the longstanding issue of illegal immigrants in the state, Abdullah said he would direct Home Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar to put Sabah on top priority and take action to resolve



Frank talks: Abdullah reacting to a question during the press conference in Kota Kinabalu yesterday. With him is Musa.

the problem.

He said solutions would include the setting up of temporary detention centres.

On the setting up of a special ministry for Sabah and Sarawak, Abdullah said that needed to be studied as it could duplicate the functions of other ministries like Education, Rural Development, Agriculture and Works, which were

involved in channelling funds to the two states.

On the replacement for the two deputy minister positions which were turned down by Sabah MPs and the position of Parliament Speaker, Abdullah said there was no decision yet.

He added that he would discuss the matter with Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman.

Yesterday, Abdullah met Sabah Umno before having separate meetings with the presidents of Parti Bersatu Sabah (Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan), Sabah Progressive Party (Datuk Yong Teck Lee), Upko (Tan Sri Bernard Dompok), Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (Tan Sri Joseph Kurup) and Liberal Democratic Party (Datuk V.K. Liew).

He then met Sabah MCA chief Datuk Edward Khoo, Sabah MIC chief Datuk V. Jothi and Sabah Gerakan chief Datuk Robin Loh together.

"I met them separately but they were all in one voice on the issues. This shows that they feel for these issues equally and they are hoping for immediate action as Barisan has won big in Sabah," Abdullah said.

He said Sabah Umno was adamant in its views and wanted to make sure he understood the issues.

Abdullah said the leaders were making their requests because they had obtained a strong mandate for the Barisan and wanted various issues resolved.

He later attended a thanksgiving dinner organised by Sabah Barisan before returning home.