

Taib Steps Down On Feb 28, Adenan To Take Over As Sarawak CM

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KUCHING, Feb 12 (Bernama) -- Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud Wednesday announced that he will be stepping down as chief minister effective Feb 28 and would be succeeded by Special Functions Minister at the Chief Minister's Office and Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) Supreme Council member Tan Sri Adenan Satem.

Taib said he handed over his resignation letter to Yang di-Pertua Negeri Sarawak Tun Abang Muhammad Salahuddin Abang Barieng, Wednesday.

"When I informed him (Tun Salahuddin) of my intention (to resign as the Chief Minister), he had no objection," he told a press conference after having an audience with the Sarawak Head of State at the Astana Negeri here.

Taib said Adenan's name was recommended to Salahuddin, which the latter agreed to.

He added that the swearing in ceremony for the new Sarawak Chief Minister was also scheduled for Feb 28.

"Adenan represents a kind of agreement between the three candidates (mentioned to succeed Taib as the Chief Minister)," Taib said. The other two candidates were PBB deputy president Datuk Amar Abang Johari Tun Openg and Senior Vice President Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan.

Taib said the selection of Adenan, who is also the assemblyman for Tanjung Datu, as his successor was also to make sure that the State Barisan Nasional (BN) would continue to keep the team spirit that had been thriving among them over the last few years.

Adenan is also PBB Information Chief and MP for Batang Sadong.

Taib expressed his confidence that with the established policies that had been developed together and the team of leaders who would be working with Adenan, Sarawak would keep up the momentum of fast development in the future.

Taib, who had held the Chief Minister's position since 1981, said he would also be giving up his Balingian State seat following his resignation.

"Any by-election after I leave should be left to the new Chief Minister (Adenan) to decide and probably it will be his first duty to consult all the other relevant Barisan Nasional partners as to who will fill it. I have no people in mind to replace me and to be fair, I leave it to the (new) Chief Minister," he said.

Taib said that while he accepted graciously the recommendation for him to become the next Sarawak Head of State should Tun Salahuddin decline his appointment's extension, it would be up to Yang Dipertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to decide on this (succession).

He said he was made to understand that those aligned to him in the State wanted him to become the next Yang di-Pertua Negeri Sarawak to ensure that the confidence that had been built on the State's stability over the years would be least affected.

"All (the) investors or other people who have faith in Sarawak will know that I have prepared a team that is well equipped to run the State and understand the mood of investors on Sarawak as much as I do and I think that is the best I can hope for," he said.

Asked on what was his best achievement in his 33-year tenure as the Chief Minister of Sarawak, Taib said: "In all humility, I can say that I'm quite happy to see one thing... that in the Barisan Nasional the feeling of racial cooperation has grown, at least among the natives.

"I must say here, I think I could not have asked for a better opportunity to serve the country than as what I have done with all the limitations but one thing I can say is this ... I enjoy working with all my colleagues because over the years we have reached greater understanding with each other than we first started," he said.

Taib said when he first started as the Chief Minister, there were a lot of misunderstandings between him and the other State leaders but the relationship had grown for the better over the last two decades.

"I must say apart from (the) political manouverings going on between the opposition and the government, I think we had a relatively harmonious political development over the last 20 years and we should keep it that way," he said.

He said that he was not sad to leave even after so many years at the helm as he believed that he was leaving the task of governing the State under good and experienced hands who could do their jobs well without him.

In a joking tone, he said the only sad thing for him would be the pressure of the work as a Chief Minister.

"I'm so used to working under pressure all the time so maybe I'm going to miss that. I've got to learn not to drive (at a) sports car's speed... but a more sedan speed. It is more consistent to my age," he said.

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