

## **Dr M praises Taib for having served Sarawak well**

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Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (pic) today praised outgoing Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud for having provided excellent service to enable the Barisan Nasional (BN) administer the state for a long time.

He said Sarawak under the leadership of Taib had garnered the strong support of the people and had won many elections.

He also said that Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), as the principal partner of the Sarawak BN, had made the coalition strong and more united and contributed much to the state through various development projects.

Dr Mahathir said that any leader who was advanced in age would have to step down to give others a chance to lead.

"I hope the successor (of Taib) will get the support that he has received so far and there will be no enmity among the potential successors," he said after solo cyclist Wan Hashim Wan Mahmood, 68, called on him at the Perdana Leadership Foundation, in Putrajaya. Wan Hashim launched his mission on January 26 to cycle solo around Peninsular Malaysia.

Taib, 78, who is PBB president and Sarawak BN chairman, had announced that he was stepping down soon as the chief minister, a post he has held since 1981.

Speculation is rife that Taib will step down by the end of this month and be appointed as the next Yang Dipertua Negeri of Sarawak.

Replying to a question, Dr Mahathir said Taib's departure as the chief minister would have an effect on PBB but added that he felt that the party would continue to excel, given the strong unity it possessed.

"I feel PBB is strong. We have to also take the party into account. The party has served Sarawak well; much development was implemented by the party under Abdul Taib Mahmud. I am confident his successor will also be able to do the same," he said.

In Kuching, former PBB publicity chief Datuk Peter Minos said Taib would surely select as his successor someone who would be able to continue to maintain unity in the party and state BN.

Taib would also like to see that his successor was able to lead the many races in the state to live in unity and harmony, safeguard Sarawak's basic interests to the best of his ability and maintain Sarawak's autonomy within Malaysia.

"Definitely, he also wants someone who can keep up the good work done so far in the social and economic sectors, if not better it.

"We will miss Abdul Taib for all the good things he has done for the state and its people.

"Whatever critics and cynics say, Abdul Taib has truly done his best in keeping Sarawak safe, stable, peaceful and progressive," he said. – Bernama, February 10, 2014.

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