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Ghafar-Mahathir

**MAHATHIR QUALIFIED TO SERVE AS SENIOR MINISTER AFTER RETIREMENT**

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TAIPTING, July 17 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba feels that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is qualified to continue as a senior minister after he retires from leadership of the nation.

Dr Mahathir was a leader of calibre and his services would still be needed by the country and the people after his retirement, he told reporters after attending a meeting with the people here, today.

He was commenting on Kumpulan Melewar chairman Tunku Abdullah Tuanku Abdu Rahman's suggestion in an RIM interview, published in the press recently, that Dr Mahathir be appointed a senior minister, like Encik Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, if Malaysia faced problems after his retirement as prime minister.

Tunku Abdullah had said that on the whole the political and business climate in Malaysia was good and he expected it to continue even after Dr Mahathir retired because the Barisan Nasional had quality leaders.

However, should the country face any problem after that, Dr Mahathir should be appointed to an important post in the Cabinet, he had added.

Describing Tengku Abdullah's suggestion as a good one, Ghafar said that if Dr Mahathir wanted to hold any post, after he retired, he believed the people would support him and the prime minister then would accept him for an important cabinet post. -- more

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Ghafar-Mahathir 2 (last.) Taiping

This, he said, was because Dr Mahathir was eminently qualified for the post of senior minister, not only in appreciation for his service but also because he had proven his ability to the extent of gaining international recognition.

Asked whether Dr Mahathir had indicated that he was stepping down, Ghafar said: "The prime minister has never indicated such intention. I am only indicating my hope to see Dr Mahathir in continuous good health so that he can lead the nation for the rest of his life."

He also praised Dr Mahathir for his humility in not wanting to be honoured with titles and for not being involved in anything that could connect him to any slander.

He called on the people to help the government led by Dr Mahathir to ensure that Malaysia emerged as a developed nation.

"After our country is developed and progressive and has eradicated unemployment, we will be recognised at international level and the foreigners will respect and listen to the words of our leader, Dr Mahathir," he said. -- Bernama

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