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DPM: I keep in touch with Dr M

MANILA, Tues: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today described his responsibility as Acting Prime Minister as a continuation of what he has been doing all along.

He said he has the full support of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is on a two-month leave, the Cabinet and the party.

"(We are in) a modern, sophisticated system ... we are not talking about a time when there is no communication ... I have e-mail, facsimile and the telephone.

"I still consult (Dr Mahathir) on major issues ... but not in the last two days, I have not," he told local and foreign journalists when asked how he felt to be in the "driver's seat" of the country.

Today is his second day as Acting Prime Minister.

Anwar, who is Finance Minister, is here for the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) 30th International general meeting.

"I do not want to bother him (with details of some issues).

"He has given me his full trust and confidence. I want him to rest, concentrate on other things, think and write, read and come back re-energised," Anwar said,

Anwar expressed his disappointment as there were still questions on the Prime Minister's retirement and health despite the fact that Dr Mahathir had cleared the air on the matter.

"I don't think the questions were fair. I was there (at the press conference when Dr Mahathir was asked about his two-month leave). I was very uncomfortable and embarrassed.

"I would know if he was ill. I would certainly be the first few he would confide in.

"As for his retirement, Dr Mahathir has all the support possible. There is no reason why the issue should crop up.

"I am comfortable ... in many ways, I was his understudy, guided by him and we have an excellent working relationship," he added.

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