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DRB-Hicom senior staff get assurance

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir today met with about 150 senior management staff of the DRB-Hicom Group at the Economic Planning Unit auditorium.

During his 45-minute address to them, Dr Mahathir repeated his assurance that the Government would continue to give its full backing to the DRB-Hicom Group's activities.

"The Prime Minister felt he should address the senior management staff personally, instead of only through the directors so as to convey the earnestness of his message," said newly-appointed chairman Datuk Mohd Saleh Sulong.

He was speaking to reporters who were waiting for him outside the Prime Minister's Department.

He was asked why there was a need for the Prime Minister to reiterate his support for DRB-Hicom Group despite having given similar assurances earlier.

Saleh succeeded Tan Sri Yahaya Ahmad, who died on March 3 in a helicopter crash at Kampung Atong, Jeransang, Kuala Lipis while en route to Kuala Terengganu to visit his ailing mother.

"More of the senior management staff wanted to attend this meeting, but the auditorium could not take any more," Saleh said.

The staff had arrived in four Intrakota buses at 3.45pm, with the top management coming mainly in Proton Perdanas, the top model in the Proton's car range.

Mohd Saleh said the Prime Minister reiterated his request for the group's staff to be committed to the vision of the late Yahaya, as most of the group's projects were of national interest.

"But, even before today's meeting, I have been receiving numerous pledges from both my senior and lower-ranking staff that they would remain committed."

"Not a single staff member has handed in a resignation letter over the past one week," he said.

On the late Yahaya's stakes in the group, he said he would remain custodian of these interests until Yahaya's children came of age, but declined to say when this would be.

"It is a very personal matter between the late Tan Sri, his children and myself and I would have to also consult the other joint-custodian," whom Mohd Saleh declined to name.

"Tan Sri's children would have to complete their education and then receive sufficient training to take over some of the management posts within the DRB-Hicom Group."

On talk that his appointment was only temporary, Mohd Saleh said this was so only in terms of him making way later for Yahaya's children.

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