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Mahathir-Cabinet

MAHATHIR SAYS NO REASON TO RESHUFFLE PRESENT CABINET

KOTA KINABALU, Feb 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he has no plans to reshuffle the present Cabinet.

He said he has no problem with the present Cabinet line-up.

"I am not planning any (reshuffle). Why should I plan any? I have no problem (with the present Cabinet)," he told a news conference at the old airport terminal here before returning to Kuala Lumpur after ending a two-day visit to Sabah.

He was asked to comment on a report in a local Chinese language newspaper which last week published a speculative report of an imminent Cabinet reshuffle, citing "reliable Umno sources".

The Singapore Sunday Times picked up the report and also wrote about a possible Cabinet reshuffle two days ago.

Said Dr Mahathir: "We believe in freedom of the press, freedom of expression and freedom of speculation. So they can speculate. If you care to look into the past, the number of speculation, prediction...there were plenty.

"But on the other hand, if you said that next year there will be an election and there is no election, you will say next year there will be an election.

"Eventually we will have an election and then when we have the election, they said `haa...I said so,' but the 10 times off the mark were forgotten. We can't escape, there has to be an election."

In the same way, he said, speculation was being raised regarding a Cabinet reshuffle because "apparently they know the thinking of the Prime Minister".

Among those present at the airport to send off the Prime Minister were Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, Land and Cooperative Development Minister Datuk Osu Sukam and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Chong Kah Kiat.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir launched the Tour De Langkawi at the Sabah Trade Centre and received contributions from companies sponsoring the international cycling race which is participated by 150 cyclists.

He also held meetings with state Umno leaders and members of the Sabah Council of Churches and toured the Gayana Bay Resort on Pulau Gaya facing the state capital. -- BERNAMA

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