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PM gratified with pledge of support by BN leaders

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he was gratified with the pledge of support and loyalty given to him as the Prime Minister by Barisan Nasional component party leaders.

"I am quite sure it's not personal. It is because the country needs a leader and they had pledged their loyalty to the current leader," he told reporters after a three-hour visit to the high-tech Cyberjaya intelligent city.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said earlier today leaders of the ruling coalition had pledged undivided support for Dr Mahathir in overcoming the economic woes at the BN supreme council meeting on Sunday.

The pledge of support came amid what Dr Ling described as "adverse foreign media" reports against Malaysia and Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir said the BN supreme council meeting was held to brief party leaders about the economic situation and was not for them to pledge their loyalty and support to him.

"It is important for them to understand this. I took the opportunity to explain to them since they were here," Dr Mahathir said.

The BN leaders had attended the launching of the "Dana Untuk Malaysia" by Dr Mahathir last Sunday. The fund, aimed at collecting donations for the Dana Khas Negara, or Special National Fund, was launched by Dr Mahathir.

Asked if he had any advice for delegates in the Umno general assembly, Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said: "I will give my advice when I talk to them (Umno delegates) on Wednesday."

He said he would give them strong advice but that will not stop them from talking. "We are a very democratic party."

Asked if they were "talking" about anything in particular, Dr Mahathir said: "Of course, they are talking about a lot of things. You are expecting fireworks, so we will see whether there will be fireworks."

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today he expected the delegates to focus their debate on economic problems.

Anwar was speaking to reporters after a visit to Syarikat Takaful Malaysia at the Menara Tun Razak.

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