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Ah Lek confirms he will not be contesting

HUMAN Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek yesterday confirmed that he will not be contesting in the November 29 general elections, ending the prolonged speculation about his decision.

Lim, who is MCA deputy president and member of Parliament for Bentong, said he has informed his decision to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in writing.

As Pahang MCA chairman, he has also submitted the list of candidates, without his name, to MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik.

Speaking at a news conference after launching the Social Security Organisation school assistance scheme in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, the minister said: "I want to lead a simple life.. my wish is to spend more time with my family."

Lim said he has made up his mind to retire from politics despite being asked by many people including the MCA leaders, Cabinet ministers, people in his constituency and trade unions, to reconsider his decision.

Asked whether he will reconsider his decision if the Prime Minister wants him to stay, he said quietly: "I just want to retire... I've done the best for the people and the party."

He said he now feels comfortable after serving for 25 years, including 10 years in the Cabinet, and it is time for him to "pass the baton to someone else".

Lim said his decision has got nothing to do with problems in the party. He stressed that there is no problems or split within MCA and that he regards Ling as his "twin" whom he always works with in various MCA projects.

"It (his retirement) has been planned since 1986. This is not an overnight or last-minute decision," he added.

Lim also appeals to the media not to make his retirement an issue.

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