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Mahathir-Zhu Rongi

BN DOES NOT NEED FOREIGN SUPPORT TO WIN ELECTIONS, SAYS DR M

PUTRAJAYA, Nov 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that the incumbent Barisan Nasional government does not need any foreign assistance to be returned to power in the Nov 29 general election.

He dismissed claims by the DAP that the BN would capitalise on Chinese premier Zhu Rongi's visit to Malaysia next week to win votes from the Chinese electorate.

"If he (DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang) is suggesting that I told Premier Zhu Rongi that please come and support me... well we don't ask for foreign support for our elections," he told local newspaper editors at his office here today.

"He (the Chinese Premier) is a valued friend. I can spare the time so I don't think why I should (cancel the meeting)," Dr Mahathir said.

Dr Mahathir said that since his Chinese counterpart would be on his way to Manila for the Asean informal summit, he did not want to spoil Zhu Rongi's schedule "by saying I'm having an election".

"If he wants to come, we are ready to receive him. Of course we will have to curtail certain programmes but they are quite happy to accept that," said Dr Mahathir.

Zhu Rongi is scheduled to visit Malaysia beginning Monday as part of a tour of the region before attending the Manila informal summit starting Nov 24.

Meanwhile in KOTA TINGGI, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Dr Mahathir and Zhu would discuss bilateral political, economic and investment issues besides international matters.

Speaking to reporters, Syed Hamid said investment could feature prominently in the talks between the two leaders given China's impending investment in a pulp and paper project in Sabah and the anticipated inflow of more Malaysian capital into China.

"We believe the visit would be a fruitful one ahead of Zhu's attendance at the Asean informal summit in Manila," Syed Hamid said.

As for international issues, Syed Hamid said the dispute over the Spratlys, which involved China and four Asean states, may or may not be discussed.

Malaysia and China are among six nations which are claiming the Spratlys, a group of islands said to be rich in oil and gas, either partly or wholly.

The other claimants are Brunei, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

-- BERNAMA

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