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Daim-Contest

DAIM WILLING TO CONTEST ANYWHERE

MERBOK, Nov 14 (Bernama) -- First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin is prepared to stand for election in any constituency that is decided by the party leadership.

At the same time, he declined to give a clear answer regarding speculation that he would not be standing for election.

"Wherever (I am) directed to contest I will comply...no problem.

"Any decision on my position will be determined by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. As a disciplined party member, I will follow whatever instructions," he told reporters after the closing and prize giving ceremony for the Kedah State Kemas Tabika "Marhaban and Nasyid" Competition at Merbok Mosque, here today.

Even before speculation that Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali would stand as a candidate in the Tunjang State Assembly constituency could be answered, many had assumed that Daim, who is also the member of parliament for Merbok, would retire from politics.

The speculation was based on the fact that the economy had recovered and that he wanted to concentrate on business.

Daim said he had actually requested not to be nominated as a candidate in the last general election in 1995 following his resignation as Finance Minister in 1991.

"Actually I wanted to retire that year, but (I) was directed to stand for election," he said.

Asked whether now, after the recovery of the Malaysian economy, was the right time for him to retire from politics, Daim said: "That is actually my intention."

He said: "With the economic revival I actually plan to retire...whether the time is right or not, it is the top leadership that makes the final decision."

Commenting on the budget, he said it would be tabled again after the new government is formed.

The remaining one month that is in December (after the general election and as the year 2000 approaches), would be sufficient to approve the budget, he added.

-- BERNAMA

MZM AO