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Mahathir-PM

DR MAHATHIR STILL WISH TO REMAIN AS PRIME MINISTER

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 25 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he still wish to remain as prime minister within this short-term period.

"I wish to...still wish to," he said when asked by Indonesian journalists at the joint news conference between Dr Mahathir and President B.J.Habibie at the end of their discussions, here.

Answering another question from an Indonesian journalist, Dr Mahathir said that he had not decided when to hold the general election.

"I will announce it when the time comes," he said.

Dr Mahathir and Habibie earlier held a four-eye meeting followed by a meeting of the Malaysian and Indonesian delegations.

Habibie headed an 80-member delegation during the one-day visit here as a follow-up to their discussions in Batam in May.

Dr Mahathir said that talk that he would call for the general election on his return from China recently was mere speculation.

"Everyone has a right to make speculation. Returning from China, I should call for an election...(the late Prime Minister) Tun Razak returned from China and held an election," he said.

Asked whether they discussed the action of taking out government documents abroad as claimed by the Youth head of the National Justice Party (Keadilan), Mohamed Ezam Mohamed Nor, Dr Mahathir said that the matter was not discussed.

"It is Malaysia's domestic issue...we do not discuss our respective domestic issues," he said.

Habibie, when asked to state his stand over reports that he had expressed support and sympathy for former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, said: "I leave it to the procedures here in your country and I think nobody is going to be legally defensive.

"I say that not only for me but also Prime Minister (Dr Mahathir) cannot do that. I have nothing to say," he said, turning to Dr Mahathir.

The president said that he did not know much regarding Anwar's case as he had a lot of other things to do in his country.

"I came here not for that purpose but to extend our relations and I really believe, in Malaysia, there's a law and that's it," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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