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2000 Budget scheduled for tabling on Oct 29

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin is scheduled to table the 2000 Budget at 4pm on Oct 29 despite much speculation of an early general election in November.

Parliament public liaison officer Ahmad Asri Zakaria today confirmed that the schedule was still valid and MPs would be notified of the meeting dates this week.

He said the Budget meeting would begin on Oct 18 for the Dewan Rakyat and was scheduled to end on Dec 9. The Dewan Negara will meet from Dec 6 to Dec 16.

This is expected to be the longest Dewan Rakyat meeting where MPs will have 32 sittings.

Ahmad Asri said Parliament would sit from 10am to 5.30pm, from Mondays to Thursdays, with a 90-minute lunch break from 1pm to 2.30pm each day.

The current Parliament's term expires in June next year but there has been talk that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will call for general election this year.

Expectations are that he might advise the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to dissolve Parliament to pave the way for the country's 10th general election later this month.

Sceptics, however, point to the Budget meeting of Parliament and various major international conferences as reasons why the general election will be called next year. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Durban, South Africa on Nov 12-15.

Ahmad Asri said according to the Federal Constitution, a general election must be held within 60 days from the date of the dissolution of Parliament.

Two Bills are listed in the Order Paper for debate during this meeting. They are the Supplementary Supply Bill 1999 and Drug Sales Act (Amendment) Bill 1999.

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