

14 FEB 1999

MAHATHIR SHOULD CONTINUE TO LEAD MALAYSIA, SAYS SYED HAMID

LONDON, Feb 14 (Bernama) -- Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar met Malaysian students for a dialogue here where he explained to them why Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad should continue to lead the country into the next millennium.

Answering a question from a student at Malaysia Hall yesterday, Syed Hamid who is also an Umno Supreme Council member, said the question of Dr Mahathir stepping down and then becoming a senior minister like Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore could not happen in Malaysia.

"As far as we are concerned, we still want Dr Mahathir to lead Umno as well as leading the country into the 21st century.

"We now no longer look at Dr Mahathir stepping down. We need him because of his experience, his ability and he has been managing the country well," he said.

Syed Hamid described Dr Mahathir as "full of ideas."

"His ideas are not simply theoretical but practical that can be implemented to take the country out of the present difficulties," he said.

On the economy, Syed Hamid said although conditions remained difficult, Malaysia was already projected to chalk 1 per cent growth this year.

"We are taking all the measures to help all the Malaysian companies whose business are having a direct impact on the wellbeing of the country," he added.

-- BERNAMA

SH RM