

PM dismisses speculation that Daim has resigned

SUN - 2 JUN 2001

SUBANG, Fri: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today dismissed speculation that Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin has resigned from the cabinet.

Speaking to journalists on arrival from Jakarta, where he had attended the Group of 15 (G15) Summit, Mahathir said he has not received any resignation letter from Daim.

"Did he say he resigned? *Saya kalau speculation tak mahu comment* (if it is speculation I don't want to comment)," he said when pestered for comments on Daim.

Speculation is rife that Daim, who went on leave for two months, will resign today, on his first day back at work.

On Wednesday, Daim who was asked on his position in the cabinet, said that he would be back at work today. He also denied rumours on his resignation, saying that he had not said that he would resign.

The rumour mill went into overdrive after an AP-Dow Jones news wire report that this morning's press conference was "hastily called" and that Mahathir was expected to make a major

announcement.

"It is not correct," the prime minister's assistant press secretary, Sufi Yusoff, said when contacted by Bernama.

"Dow Jones' news flash that the prime minister is expected to make a major announcement is pure speculation.

"Such speculation and announcement without prior confirmation from this (PM's) office is irresponsible and hardly accurate," Sufi said.

The full text of the Dow Jones newsflash reads: "Judging by hastily called media conference

around 0330 GMT for local media, PM Mahathir expected to make major announcement today; markets likely to be jittery amid mounting speculation (Tun) Daim (Zainuddin) may resign (as finance minister).

"While initial plan was for briefing exclusively for official government-owned media, other local media organisations were invited less than one hour before it's due to start; foreign media not allowed to attend briefing, Mahathir holding media conference on return from G15 meeting in Jakarta. KLCI now down 0.1

per cent at 572.1."

Sufi clarified that the prime minister's press conference mentioned in the AP-Dow Jones report was actually a normal media conference held every time Mahathir returned from an overseas trip and was open to local media.

Sufi said it was not true that the local media organisations were invited less than an hour before the start of the media conference.

"The invitation was conveyed through the national news agency, Bernama, yesterday," he said.