

No plan to bring Ku Li back, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has dismissed rumours that former finance minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah would be asked to re-join the Cabinet.

Dr Mahathir said there was no such plan and in fact he had not heard any rumour to that effect.

"Today is the first time I am hearing this," he told reporters at the Parliament lobby after tabling the Plan yesterday.

Razaleigh, the MP for Gua Musang, recently urged Dr Mahathir not to retire and said Malaysia still needed the Prime Minister's leadership.

He told reporters his call was sincere and it was not in his nature to flatter the premier.

He made the statement after Dr Mahathir had opened the Gua Musang Umno division meeting.

Asked about speculation that there was a rift between him and Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, Dr Mahathir said in jest:

"I just fought with him (in Parliament). That is why he came to listen to my voice (tabling the Plan). I don't know why he came because he is on leave."

Daim made a quiet exit right after the Prime Minister completed his speech on the Plan.

Cornered by reporters before he left the building, Daim said he took two-months' leave because he wanted a break.

"Why, am I not entitled to my leave?" he said when asked why he was taking leave now.

Asked whether his leave was a prelude to him leaving the Government, Daim just said: "I'm on leave."

When it was pointed out that he was on leave when the economy was not doing well, he said: "It is just a slow-down."