

# No cabinet reshuffle: Dr M

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It is just media speculation, says Mahathir

There is no need for a cabinet reshuffle in order to fill the finance minister's post, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Speaking to reporters after closing the Umno general assembly here, he said the next finance minister need not necessarily come from among members of the present cabinet.

"I can appoint anybody," he said, dismissing a reporter's suggestion that there is talk of a reshuffle on the ground as "media speculation".

On Daim's resignation, he explained: "This is not the first time he has left the government. He felt that he has contributed enough, and asked to be relieved. I gave him two months to think it over but he insisted that he should leave.

"That's a very simple explanation, nothing mysterious about it. There is no fist fight between us."

Replying to a Singaporean journalist's question whether he would remain as Umno president even after his resignation as prime minister, Mahathir said, "You are free to speculate. Everything is possible."

"You can even have senior ministers here, and never leave the power to others ... keep it within the family," he said to the laughter of the reporters.

On his call for Umno members to be loyal to the party president, he acknowledged that it is aimed at preparing the party for the next election, as he said campaigning never ends in Malaysia.

"PAS never allows us to take a breather. As soon as an election is over, they start going into villages, spreading lies and misusing mosques," he said.

He also said the Malays need to do away with jeal-

ousy and vengeance if they want to see members of the community achieve excellence.

"If a Malay achieves success, then he is labelled a crony, although he had

worked for it himself. Malays will never succeed if this attitude remains."

Asked if he sees a change in support among Umno members after the assembly, he said it was obvious from

the extraordinary reaction during his winding-up speech.

"They were very supportive of our suggestions, and I think their support is genuine," he said.