

19 APR 2001

Mahathir-Daim

DAIM ON LEAVE FOR TWO MONTHS, SAYS PM

GENTING HIGHLANDS, April 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today confirmed that Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin is on leave for two months.

However, Dr Mahathir declined to comment when asked by reporters whether this was a prelude to Daim resigning.

"That you've got to ask him.

"If you ask me and I answer, he may get angry," he said in response to news reports that Daim has applied for three months' leave and that a Cabinet minister will be acting for him.

Dr Mahathir said Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz would represent Daim in the Cabinet.

"He has taken leave for two months and Nazri is now representing him in the Cabinet," the prime minister said after opening the national education covention 2001 at the Aminuddin Baki Institute at Sri Layang, here.

Asked whether there was a need for an acting finance minister, Dr Mahathir said there was no need as he (Daim) was still in the office going through all the documents and letters despite being on leave.

Asked further what the reasons were for Daim to go on leave, Dr Mahathir said: "He could be tired, you people (media) disturb him a lot, asking questions endlessly and criticising him over the Malaysia Airlines issue.

-- BERNAMA

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