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Mahathir-Syed Razak

NO TRUTH ABOUT TALK ON SYED RAZAK'S POSITION, SAYS PM

ALOR SETAR, Jan 14 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today dismissed speculation that Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain would be replaced as the Kedah Menteri Besar.

"No truth at all about it," he said when asked to comment on speculation on Syed Razak's position as the Menteri Besar.

Asked whether he was satisfied with Syed Razak's performance since assuming the post in December 1999, the prime minister said: "I'm not dissatisfied. He has done quite a good job."

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters at the Sultan Abdul Halim Airport in Kepala Batas here before returning to Kuala Lumpur.

He was for an investiture ceremony in conjunction with the Sultan of Kedah's 73rd birthday at Istana Anak Bukit where birthday greetings were extended to his Highness.

There have been persistent rumours that Syed Razak would be replaced and that he might be involved in a Cabinet reshuffle soon.

Syed Razak has denied that he was going to resign his post.

The talk started when a Chinese newspaper reported that he would be relinquishing his post soon.

The speculation surfaced again when a newspaper reported that Syed Razak was summoned to meet the prime minister in Putrajaya two days ago.

Syed Razak yesterday clarified that he was in Putrajaya to meet Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, and not the prime minister.

Syed Razak, when asked on Dr Mahathir's statement, said he would like to thank the prime minister for clearing the air.

"All this while I have not been too affected by the speculation. Amidst the speculation I continued with my duties as normal and concentrated on bringing development to the state," he said.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir said discussions on the holding of Malay unity talks between Umno and PAS were at the technical stage.

The discussions involving Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and his PAS counterpart Nasharudin Mat Isa touched on the logistics and format for the proposed talks, he said.

In Pendang, PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor said PAS had several proposals to be forwarded to Umno at the meeting.

"However, we will not agree to any Umno request which goes against the PAS struggle," he told reporters after speaking at a ceramah in Gajah Putih last night.

He said in principle PAS felt that such talks should encompass the issue of national unity.

In Kangar, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said efforts to unite the Malays should not be viewed lightly as Malay unity would have a bearing on national unity.

The strength of the country would depend on the strength of the Malays too, he said at a Hari Raya gathering for the Tambun Tualang and Pauh state constituencies today.

-- BERNAMA

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