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DR MAHATHIR REAFFIRMS DECISION TO STEP DOWN

PUTRAJAYA, Nov 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reaffirmed his decision to retire in October next year regardless whether the general election is held.

However, he indicated that he would prefer to step down before the election.

"I will step down in October whether there is general election or not, but I would rather step down before the election," he said during a dialogue with 31 members of the Japan National Press Club here.

Dr Mahathir said that he would participate as a party supporter, and not as a candidate, to ensure Barisan Nasional's victory.

The prime minister said that he would then decide what to do but obviously would have the time to do some writing.

In response from the floor about the progress of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), he said that the project had succeeded beyond its target.

The initial target for 2003 was to have 500 companies with 30 world-class entities, he said. However, currently the MSC already attracted 700 companies with 50 of them world-class firms, Dr Mahathir said.

He added that more companies had expressed their interest to locate their operation in the MSC area.

-- BERNAMA

ANA LES AHH RM