

24/11/2002

Dr M: I will not change mind about quitting

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he will not change his mind about quitting from active politics next October.

Meeting with the Malaysian community at Rumah Malaysia in Paris on Friday night, the Prime Minister said in 11 months he would relinquish all political and government positions.

"To change my mind will be bad for the country, for the party and for me," he said.

Dr Mahathir's assertion met with audible gasps from the audience, with one of them saying, "But what do we do without you?"

Replied Dr Mahathir, "Well, my colleague (Datuk Seri) Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is a capable man. I am sure we will get along well even after he takes over.

"I don't think Malaysians will miss me."

The reply prompted an immediate response from the audience, "We will, we will."

To a question on whether upon his retirement he would forget the plans, programmes and vision that he had laid out for the nation, Dr Mahathir, who was in Paris to attend yesterday's Pledging Conference on the Reconstruction of Lebanon, said he would not.

"I am resigning as Prime Minister, Umno president and other political positions.

"However, I will continue to help the Government, Umno and Barisan Nasional in whatever way I can," he said.