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NAM-Mahathir (OIC)

ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT WON'T CLASH WITH SPECIAL OIC MEETING IN KL

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 17 (Bernama) -- The proposed Arab League summit at the end of the month will not clash with Malaysia's plan to call an emergency meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) a day after the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit here, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"No," the prime minister said when asked whether the Arab League summit would clash with the special Kuala Lumpur OIC meeting, scheduled for Feb 26, to discuss pressing issues affecting the Muslims now, including the impending United States-led war against Iraq.

"We are holding it one day earlier," Dr Mahathir told a media conference after witnessing the full-dress rehearsal of the opening of the NAM summit which will be held at the Putra World Trade Centre here on Feb 24 and 25.

"But (the Arab League) foreign ministers might have a meeting earlier," he said.

It was reported that the Arab League proposed to hold summit meetings from Feb 27 to March 1 in Egypt with the first "extraordinary" sessions focusing on Iraq.

Elaborating on the special OIC meeting, Dr Mahathir said: "There is no meeting on Iraq as such, but we are hoping to hold an informal discussion among heads of government of Muslim countries who are attending the NAM (summit)."

Forty of the 114 NAM members are OIC countries.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would also be extending invitations to other Muslim countries to attend the special OIC meeting.

To a question, the prime minister said he had not been in communication with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to ask him to delay the Arab League summit because the meeting in Cairo would be held a day after the OIC meeting here.

-- BERNAMA

MAD MAM JK