

11 JAN 2003

Mahathir-MCA

DECISION ON LING'S POSITION AT APPROPRIATE TIME

PUTRAJAYA, Jan 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he has not decided yet whether to accept or reject Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik's resignation as Transport Minister.

"I will make the decision when it suits my time and the government's interest because I have to think very carefully when replacing a minister in a very important position," he told reporters after meeting a group of 84 scouts from the United Kingdom at the Prime Minister's Department here today.

Dr Mahathir was asked when he would decide on Dr Ling's position in the Cabinet following Dr Ling's undated resignation letter, which was submitted to him on Aug 15 last year.

Asked if he had received any name from the MCA as replacement for Dr Ling, Dr Mahathir said he had not.

On his meeting with British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw yesterday, he said Malaysia expressed its unhappiness over the travel warnings issued by the British government on the region.

He said they should be more specific when issuing such travel warnings.

On Iraq, Dr Mahathir said he hoped some "miracle" would happen to avert war in Iraq.

The Prime Minister met the scouts for about an hour.

The scouts, aged between 14 and 17, are the first group among 800 scouts from the United Kingdom to visit Malaysia after attending the 20th World Scouts Jamboree in Thailand at the end of last year.

Also present at the meeting were Malaysia's Chief Scout Tan Sri Dr Sulaiman Daud and Chief Commissioner of Scouts Datuk Hamidin Abdullah.

Also present were British High Commissioner to Malaysia Bruce Cleghorn and Swedish Charge d'affaires Johan Borgstam.

The scouts also attended a family adoption programme involving 100 families in Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Selangor, Melaka, Pahang and the Federal Territory.

Their visit ends tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

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