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Mahathir-Interfere

"I WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH NATION'S ADMINISTRATION" -- DR MAHATHIR

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 27 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he will not interfere with the running of the country after stepping down as Prime Minister on Oct 31.

"After the 31st (of October), I have no right to decide on anything. I will step back and will not interfere with the administration of our country," Dr Mahathir said in his speech at the presentation of the Treasury's Outstanding Service Awards 2002 here.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Finance Minister, called on all the ministry's staff to give their full commitment and cooperation to continue the success of the country under the stewardship of his successor, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who is now the Deputy Prime Minister.

As to whether Abdullah would be the Finance Minister, it would be up for himself to decide, said Dr Mahathir.

The Prime Minister said those who would be taking over the administration should be allowed the chance to implement their tasks without any interference.

Dr Mahathir said Abdullah was expected to continue the efforts and policies decided by the government which were based on the principle of collective responsibility upheld by the Cabinet.

He said the running of the country was not based on the sole decision or action of an individual as alleged by the foreigners.

"As if our country is administered by a dictator who forces all parties to do what they do not wish to do. That is (foreign) allegation and is baseless," he said.

Dr Mahathir said even though there was a change in leadership, it did not mean that everything changed.

"We will see that definitely the methods will be different, the style different but the policy is the same, the same approach, the same objective," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he believed that the Malaysian leaders and people still wished to see their country achieved developed status by the year 2020.

"This is our objective and I believe the new leadership will strive towards this and I hope all of us will give our cooperation to the new leadership," he said.

On his retirement end of this month, after 22 years at the helm as Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir said nobody was indispensable to the extent that everything came to a halt when that person was no longer around.

He said such a notion was incorrect as everybody were important and they too would be replaced when the time arrived.

"There is no need for us to heap too high a praise to the extent of being said of trying to glorify a person. That is not our way," he said.

Instead, said Dr Mahathir, the services of civil servants who contributed towards the nation's development should also be appreciated.

-- BERNAMA

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