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Abdullah-Ling

PM WANTS LING TO REMAIN IN CABINET

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik to continue as the Transport Minister, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said Dr Mahathir told the Cabinet today of Dr Ling's desire to resign his post.

"PM still wants to retain the services of Dr Ling in the present portfolio, which means that his resignation will only take effect after consultation with PM," he told a news conference after chairing the Umno Management meeting here.

"As to when he will be allowed to relinquish the post, it is up to YAB PM himself," Abdullah said when asked if the resignation issue was discussed at the Cabinet meeting.

Yesterday, Dr Ling announced his resignation from the Cabinet for the second time in three years.

He submitted his quit letter to the Prime Minister on Aug 15 last year, but it did not state the date the resignation was to take effect.

Dr Ling first announced his intention to quit on May 22, 2000, but changed his mind on the advice of the Prime Minister.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir knew better about Dr Ling's position as the Transport Minister and his duties.

Without being asked by anyone, Dr Mahathir himself raised the matter of Dr Ling's offer to resign as the Transport Minister at yesterday's Barisan Nasional (BN) Supreme Council meeting, he said.

Dr Mahathir touched on the matter because he did not want to see anymore dispute in the MCA, he said.

"Previously, there were quarrels related to several matters between Ling and (Datuk Lim) Ah Lek and the like; when PM made the announcement, it is better that the issue of fighting in the MCA be put to rest," he said.

Abdullah said there was nothing strange about Dr Ling's decision to resign.

"It is the right of a party head to decide to resign or retire from politics. That is an individual's decision, and when he is not around there will be a new person to replace him," he said.

Abdullah was confident that Dr Ling's offer to relinquish his post would not jeopardise the government administration because his decision was not sparked by matters related to his duties as Transport Minister.

-- BERNAMA

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