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Mahathir-Leave

PRIME MINISTER TO TAKE TWO-MONTH LEAVE FROM NEXT MONTH

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 6 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he will take a two-month leave from March to April during which Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will be Acting Prime Minister.

He said this was part of the agreement that was reached for him to continue as Prime Minister until October this year.

Asked if he would attend the Formula One Race at the Sepang Circuit in March, Dr Mahathir said he had not finalised his travel plans but assured the press that he would not be meeting them during his leave.

The Prime Minister was speaking to reporters after inspecting the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) the venue for the 13th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit.

On Reuters news agency report quoting him as saying that the general election would not be held before October, he said this was correct and added this was due to time constraints.

"In March and April I will be on leave. The Umno meetings will be in May, June and July and then there will be the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) summit. Where we have time," he said.

On whether the issue of the undated resignation letter submitted by Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik would be resolved during his leave, Dr Mahathir said, "I don't know, if he (Datuk Seri Abdullah) is the Prime Minister, then he will decide."

"I'm not asking people to resign when I resign, but for the next election everybody will have to resign anyway. You cannot remain as a minister and stand for election. When the new Prime Minister takes over, he will decide (his cabinet)," Dr Mahathir said.

"I am not inviting everyone to resign. If I jump into the sea, there is no need for everyone to jump, no need."

-- BERNAMA

AZH LES AHH AAM