

02/02/2003

All Cabinet ministers have to resign when PM steps down

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - All Cabinet ministers must tender their resignation when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad retires in October in accordance with parliamentary principles and practices.

Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik today said this was the procedure which has to be adhered to.

"This is just a normal procedure under parliamentary principles and practices," said Dr Lim at the Gerakan Chinese New Year open house held at Wisma PGRM, near here.

"When a Prime Minister resigns or retires, his entire Cabinet and administration must follow suit and tender their resignation as well. The leaders of the Barisan Nasional component parties will then submit their nominations to the new Prime Minister for Cabinet appointments."

Dr Lim said it would then be the prerogative of the new Prime Minister to select his line-up.

"It is entirely up to him whether he wants to retain the old line-up.

"It is the Prime Minister's pre-rogative.

"This is just a matter of following parliamentary principles and practices.

"Don't ask me if I am going to resign. There is no point in talking about it now.

"When the time comes, we all will tender our resignation.

"Whether it is Datuk Seri Abdul-lah (Ahmad Badawi) or any other new Prime Minister, he has to go through this process.

We must appreciate this practice."

Dr Lim said he fully supported Dr Mahathir's statement on Thursday that there were no need for leaders to issue statements saying they wanted to resign and not contest in the next general election.

Dr Mahathir said leaders who are dropped as candidates should lend their support to the new line-up and ensure a Barisan Nasional victory.

He said elected representatives holding government posts, including Cabinet Ministers, should be pre-pared to make way for a new team when Abdullah takes over as Prime Minister.

Dr Lim said there was no point for leaders to express their intention to resign. "If you want to go, then do it. This kind of statement is very destructive as it takes the focus away from the country. We are not near any election, so stop all these talks."

Dr Mahathir had last June during his winding up speech at the end of the Umno general assembly announced his resignation. However, following appeals and requests from the Umno supreme council, Dr Mahathir had agreed to stay on until October.

According to political experts, in the United States, when a new president takes over, all the cabinet secretaries resign to enable him to choose his new, preferred line-up. But of course some of them would be re-appointed.

On Jan 22, Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob said he and his State Executive Councillors were willing to pave the way for new blood at the next general election. He said the decision was made with an open heart. However, Adnan said it was up to the BN leadership to decide on bringing in new faces.

On Jan 20 Perak Umno liaison committee secretary Datuk Ramly Zahari said more than 10 per cent of elected representatives had pledged to give way

to new faces.