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Moggie to stay as Minister

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CYBERJAYA, Sat. - Datuk Amar Leo Moggie's resignation as president of Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) will not affect his Cabinet position as Minister of Energy, Communications and Multimedia, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

He added that Moggie's status in the Cabinet was his (Dr Mahathir's) prerogative.

"His resignation has nothing to do with his Cabinet position. It (to resign) was his decision alone. As long as he qualifies to be a minister, I have the right to retain him," Dr Mahathir said as he was leaving the InventQjaya Sdn Bhd headquarters here after visiting its facilities.

Asked if it was convention that the new president should hold a ministerial post, he replied that Cabinet positions were not based on party posts.

"They can take over the post, but they don't take over the ministry. The ministry (post) is not their prerogative."

On Wednesday, Moggie tendered his resignation letter to PBDS secretary-general Stanley Ajang Batok in Kuching, and his deputy Datuk Seri Daniel Tajem became the new president.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir spent about two hours touring InventQjaya's FastTrack and Technology Showcase laboratory. The company conducts research in "frontier technology", such as micro and nano structures, nano technology, photonics, alternative energy, electrooptics, advanced bio-materials and advanced imaging.

InventQjaya chief executive officer and chairman Dr Sadeg Mustafa Faris briefed Dr Mahathir on the company's products, which include rechargeable metal fuel cells for electric vehicles, a stereoscopic three dimensional (3-D) projector and software that can convert 2-D images into 3-D on the Internet.

Sadeg - a Lebanese-American who is also CEO of Reveo Incorporated, the parent company of InventQjaya - was invited by Dr Mahathir to set up a research base in Malaysia when they met in New York last year.

InventQjaya is a Multimedia Super Corridor status company and it began operations in January.

Later, Dr Mahathir said he was "satisfied" with the company's work, which had a lot of potential for commercialisation.

"It takes a long time before the products can be marketed. How they are packaged and sold are also important." He added that scientific research must also be translated into useful applications for the public.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali. They had come from the Multimedia University where Dr Mahathir earlier attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the university's second phase of construction.

Dr Siti Hasmah is the university's chancellor. They were accompanied by Moggie and university president Dr Ghauth Jasmon.

They then visited the Persistence of Vision 3D animation production studio, a joint venture between the university and Double Vision Sdn Bhd to produce animated videos for corporate and advertising clients.

The second phase of the university's Cyberjaya campus will include the development of faculty buildings and student facilities. It will cost about RM80 million and is scheduled for completion in three years.