

27/09/2003

Ministry leaves it to PM, DPM to decide on Chin Peng's plea

R. Sittamparam

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The Home Ministry is leaving it to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad or Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to decide on the request by exiled Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) chief Chin Peng to visit or settle here.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Chor Chee Heung said although the ministry was aware of Chin Peng's (real name Ong Boon Hua) request, it was leaving the matter to them.

"We will leave it to Dr Mahathir or the incoming Prime Minister to decide on Chin Peng's appeal," he said after opening the Asean Council of Japan Alumni conference today.

Chor was asked to comment on whether Dr Mahathir, in view of his retirement next month, would allow the request by Chin Peng, 81.

Chor said Chin Peng, who is believed to be living in southern Thailand, had family members, including two children, in Malaysia.

Asked if Chin Peng still upheld the communist philosophy and if his impending return was seen as a security threat to Malaysia, Chor said it was wrong to speculate on the matter.

Chin Peng, as CPM secretary-general, launched a terrorist campaign against the British colonial and Malaysian Governments between 1948 and 1960.

He emerged from his jungle hide-out for the first time on Dec 28, 1955, for peace talks with then Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman in Baling which eventually failed.

His offer of laying down arms for political recognition was however rejected with the authorities asking the CPM to disband.