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Stop speculating on line-up, says DPM

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KEPALA BATAS, Sun. - Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today advised all Barisan Nasional leaders to stop discussing the new Cabinet line-up when he takes over from Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in October.

The Deputy Prime Minister said Dr Mahathir is still the Prime Minister and that everyone should focus on their work and heed all instructions given to them.

"I appreciate the gesture shown by many in wanting to give me an opportunity to decide on the new Cabinet line-up.

"I know they are sincere and that is why I have not given it much thought.

"However, let's not talk about this now since we still have a lot of work to do," he told reporters after attending a Kepala Batas MCA division Chinese New Year open house at Penang Golf Resort here today.

Also present were Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, his deputy Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya, State MCA chairman Wong Kam Hoong and Kepala Batas MCA division chairman Goh Poh Chuan.

Abdullah said this when asked to comment on Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik's call for all Cabinet Ministers to submit their resignation when Dr Mahathir retires in October.

Lim, who is also Primary Industries Minister, said it was a normal parliamentary practice for all Cabinet Ministers to resign when the Prime Minister resigns and that it was his successor's prerogative to decide on the new line-up.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir was still the nation's leader and that all parties must continue to give their support to the Prime Minister until October.

"Now is not the time to think of other things but to concentrate on work, policies and instructions given by Dr Mahathir since he will still be leading the nation until October.

"When the time comes, we will think of the other things," he said.