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CHOGM - SEC-GEN

KUALALUMPUR, OCT 16' (BERNAMA) -- THE FIGHT FOR THE POST OF COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL IS LIKELY TO BE DETERMINED BY BALLOTING DURING THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING (CHOGM) IF NO CONSENSUS IS REACHED.

PRIME MINISTER DATUKSERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, WHO IS ALSO THE CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN, REITERATED TODAY THAT MALAYSIA WOULD REMAIN NEUTRAL ON THE ISSUE.

+WE DON'T MIND ANYONE BECOMING THE NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL. WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A CONSENSUS REACHED HERE, FAILING WHICH WE WILL HAVE SOME BALLOTING,+ HE TOLD A PRE-CHOGM PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE HERE. THE SIX-DAY MEETING STARTS ON WEDNESDAY.

TWO CANDIDATES ARE VYING FOR THE POST TO SUCCEED SIR SHRIDATH RAMPHAL, WHO HAS DECLINED REAPPOINTMENT AFTER 15 YEARS AS HEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT.

THEY ARE DEPUTY COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL CHIEF EMEKA ANYAOKU OF NIGERIA AND FORMER AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER MALCOLM FRASER.

+AT THIS POINT OF-TIME! WE CANNOT SAY WHO IS THE FAVOURED CANDIDATE. AS CHAIRMAN, OUR DUTY IS REALLY TO TRY TO ENSURE IF THERE IS A BALLOTING FOR THIS, IT WILL BE DONE PROPERLY AND IT IS UP TO THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ADDED.

--BERNAMA
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