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Mahathir-Cabinet

NEW DPM MAY BE APPOINTED BEFORE JANUARY

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov.6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he may appoint his new deputy before January.

"You must be patient, give me time (to make the announcement)," he told reporters who queried him at the end of the three-day Umno General Assembly about the appointment of a successor to Ghafar Baba.

Asked if the appointment would be made before the first meeting of the newly-elected Umno Supreme Council in January, he said: "There is that possibility."

Going by tradition, Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who was returned unopposed as Umno Deputy President, was certain to become the new deputy prime minister.

Asked whether he would be maintaining the tradition, Dr Mahathir turned to Anwar, who was seated beside him and quipped: "I can go against the party's wishes if I want to."

"But of course I may continue with party tradition." -- more

▼06/11/19-19MST

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Asked if there would be a Cabinet reshuffle following the Umno elections, Dr Mahathir said he had not given it much thought yet.

He said apart from the deputy prime minister's post, there was only one vacancy (the Rural Development Ministry which was held by Ghafar).

He also said there had been no resignations following the elections which saw the defeat of incumbent vice presidents Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno President, said the two ministers were very positive in their speeches at the assembly today and he believed they would continue supporting the party.

He said that unlike in 1987, which saw Umno going through its most fractious election ever culminating in the party being deregistered, the scenario this time was different.

"There was a lot of bitterness then," he added. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said he would name the appointed members to the Umno Supreme Council at the first meeting.

Under the party constitution, the party president could appoint 10 members to the council in addition to the 25 elected by the party assembly.

The president also appoints the Secretary-general, Treasurer-general and Information chief.

Dr Mahathir said he did not see any radical change in the line-up of the just-elected Supreme Council.

There were only four new faces and they were eminently suitable to sit on the party's policy-making body, he added. -- Bernama

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