

21 APR 1997

Sultan-MB (With Pix)

APPOINTMENT OF NEW SELANGOR MENTERI BESAR DEFERRED

KUALA LUMPUR, April 21 (Bernama) -- The appointment of the new Selangor Menteri Besar, expected to be announced today, has been deferred.

The Sultan told reporters after an audience by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at Istana Selangor here this afternoon that a candidate suitable for the post has yet to be picked.

Asked on the name mentioned to him by the Prime Minister, the Sultan said: "It is confidential."

He said that the candidate to succeed Tan Sri Muhammad Taib who resigned last Monday should be "screened and vetted" to ensure that he is really "clean."

In a serious tone, the Sultan said: "History must not be allowed to repeat itself. Let's choose carefully."

Asked regarding the qualities most essential in a Menteri Besar, the Sultan said: "Experience is not necessary, but honesty and sincerity."

He said that he would reject a Menteri Besar who seeks wealth for himself.

Selangor, he said, has many leaders but they are "not suitable."

Earlier, Dr Mahathir told reporters that he was in no rush to make a decision on the appointment of the new Menteri Besar.

"I need a little more time," he said after a 45 minute four-eye meeting.

He said: "There is no problem. I am in no rush."

"I informed Tuanku that I will take some time to make a decision...that's all. There is nothing else," he said.

When asked how many candidates he had shortlisted for the post, he replied: "No, I have not shortlisted anything."

Before the audience with the Sultan, Dr Mahathir met the Selangor executive councillors (Exco) at his office.

Asked on this meeting, he said: "The Exco gave me full mandate to make my choice and (in the meantime), they will continue their work as usual."

He said he could not give any time frame for the selection of the candidate "acceptable to all".

Asked if he had a candidate of his choice amid speculation by newspapers, he said: "I don't know anyone speculated in the papers. I don't read the papers."

He said every member of the Selangor State Legislative Assembly was eligible to be considered for the post, adding that "we will pick the right one."

The Sultan also announced he would leave for London tomorrow for a rest until May 29.

He said that Dr Mahathir was expected to submit a new list of candidates for his consent in two weeks.

"It is all up to Dr Mahathir. For the decision, just wait for another two weeks."

The Sultan expressed regret over the alleged transfer of ownership of land in Selangor during the tenure of Muhammad who resigned following two charges preferred against him in Australia for attempting to transfer cash equivalent of RM2.4 million out of Australia, at the Brisbane International Airport on Dec 22, last year.

"Selangor is very a important state. History should not repeat itself. There should not be too much losses or abuse."

"I (feel) regret. If there is no more land, where am I to go...they have taken away so much land...surely I am not expected to move over to Pulau Ketam," he said.

The Sultan also expressed sadness over the "many events" happening concerning Muhammad.

"I sympathise with the Prime Minister who has to deal with all of them (the events)," he said, obviously referring to the latest case involving Muhammad.

He said that several previous Menteris Besar also faced various personal problems. -- BERNAMA

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