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No decision on new CM yet

IPOH, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he had yet to decide on the new Malacca Chief Minister, adding that he may not appoint an acting Chief Minister to head the State Government in the interim period.

Dr Mahathir said appointing an acting Chief Minister following Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Abdul Ghani's death yesterday could lead to problems as the person might assume that he would eventually be appointed to head the State Government.

"I will look into that (appointing an acting Chief Minister). I have not studied the matter," he said when asked by reporters after opening the Safire Pharmaceuticals (M) Sdn Bhd in Seri Iskandar about 50km from here.

Mohd Zin died at the Tawakal Hospital in Kuala Lumpur without regaining consciousness following a stroke on Sunday morning. He was buried in his hometown Alor Gajah, Malacca, today.

Asked whether any decision on the candidate to take over from Mohd Zin would be announced before he goes on two-months' leave beginning May 19, Dr Mahathir said:

"Even if I go on leave, Datuk Seri Anwar (Ibrahim) is around and he is acting Prime Minister. He has full authority to make decisions."

Asked whether he would spring another surprise by selecting someone from the Federal Government - as was the case in the selection of former Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar as Selangor Menteri Besar - Dr Mahathir replied in jest:

"My ambition is to name someone from among the reporters. That will be a real surprise ... Everybody will be surprised. Everyone will faint, the reporter who is chosen, as well as those who are not (selected)."

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