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Mahathir-DPM

DR MAHATHIR STILL UNDECIDED OVER NEW DPM

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he is still considering who among "a lot of people in mind" should be his new deputy.

As he was approached yet again by reporters on the subject for the third time this week, Dr Mahathir said he had yet to make a decision on the appointment of a new DPM.

"I'm still thinking and I have not decided," he told reporters after meeting heads of Felda scheme settlers from throughout the country at Felda's Merak Kayangan hall here.

Asked whether he had already shortlisted the eligible candidates, the prime minister said: "A lot of people in mind, people who apparently consider they are eligible."

He was asked about the appointment of the new DPM before departing Hanoi yesterday and earlier at the close of last Sunday's Umno special general assembly here.

In Hanoi yesterday Dr Mahathir said he was still considering at the moment whether to appoint a new DPM before next year's Umno elections scheduled for June.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, was also non-committal when asked whether the probable candidates included those not from among the incumbent party vice presidents.

"I can't tell you all lest it will cause problems. Foreigners may not like it. Vice president will get angry. I'm not telling," he said.

Umno has three vice presidents namely Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is also Foreign Minister, Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and former Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhammad Taib who had been granted leave by the party.

The DPM post fell vacant following the expulsion of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from the Cabinet last Sept 2 and from Umno the next day.

-- BERNAMA

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