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Mahathir-Sabah

DR MAHATHIR CONFIRMS THAT GHAPUR WANTED OUT OF STATE CABINET

KOTA BAHARU, May 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today confirmed that former Sabah Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Abdul Ghapur Salleh had informed him that he did not want to join the new state cabinet.

Dr Mahathir said he had received an official request from Ghapur, who was also Finance Minister in the old state cabinet, not to be re-appointed.

"He (Ghapur) was not sworn-in yesterday because he asked not to be re-appointed. It was his choice. He asked me officially," he told reporters after opening the Kelantan Multimedia, Telecommunications and Electronics Exposition (Emtek' 98) in Tumpat, near here.

He said Umno would announce Ghapur's successor later.

Ghapur yesterday declined re-appointment to the new cabinet headed by Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, who was sworn in as Chief Minister the same day.

He cited personal problems and failure to discharge his duties, the same reasons he gave when he announced his resignation from the two posts last December, which he later withdrew.

Asked to comment on the status of Negeri Sembilan state executive councillor Datuk Waad Mansor who was charged with five counts of corrupt practice two days ago, Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said the Umno supreme council might discuss the matter at its next meeting.

Waad, who is also the state Education, Information and Human Resources Action Committee chairman, was allowed RM260,000 in two sureties and the case was fixed for mention in the Seremban High Court on June 22.

On the Kelantan government's request to the federal government to resolve the water crisis in the state, Dr Mahathir said the federal government was prepared to help, especially regarding weaknesses in water supply which was privatised to Kelantan Water Sdn Bhd three years ago.

"We were asked to intervene and we will try (to do) whatever we can." he said.

He said, however, that the PAS government must acknowledge the federal government's contribution to the development of Kelantan.

"Don't say that they do not need federal assistance. They claim that there is no economic turmoil in Kelantan because the Kelantan government is efficient. That is not true, and the people feel it," he said.

The prime minister also said that during his visit to Japan starting Monday he would make deliver speeches on the economic and financial crises, especially in the Malaysian context.

"The Japanese are interested to know what happened and the measures that we are taking," he said.

Dr Mahathir conceded that the economic downturn affecting countries like Japan had resulted in less investments from Japanese multimedia companies in Malaysia and the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

-- BERNAMA

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