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Mahathir-Cabinet

CABINET WILL BE FORMED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, SAYS PM

LANGKAWI, Dec 4 (Bernama) -- The Cabinet will be formed as soon as possible, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"As soon as possible...can be in the next five days, 10 days or 15 days," he told a news conference at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre, the venue for the aerospace segment of the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition (Lima '99).

Asked whether his deputy, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob met him here yesterday to discuss the Cabinet line-up, he said: "No".

On the recent political development in Kedah, Dr Mahathir confirmed he had accepted Tan Sri Sanusi Junid's request not to seek reappointment as the Menteri Besar.

Dr Mahathir said Sanusi sent a letter and met him, here, on Wednesday and they discussed the latter's request and reasons.

"Sanusi cited the performance of the Kedah BN in the just-concluded general election as the factor and in his opinion, he had not delivered well," the prime minister said.

The Barisan Nasional controlled 34 of the 36 state seats and all the 15 parliamentary seats in Kedah before the dissolution of the state assembly and Parliament.

However, it lost 12 state seats and eight parliamentary seats in the general election on Monday.

Asked how he rated Sanusi's performance, Dr Mahathir said: "I have no opinion."

He said he had yet to appoint Sanusi's successor.

Asked about the Kedah state assemblymen who met him here today requesting that Sanusi be reinstated as menteri besar, Dr Mahathir said: "It is an internal matter."

On the appointment of the Penang Chief Minister, Dr Mahathir said he had handed over the appointment letter to Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Asked on the Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik's claim that "power brokers" were behind the resignations of two Gerakan state assemblymen in Pulau Pinang, Dr Mahathir said: "It is not my business."

The two are Lim Chien Aun (Bayan Lepas) and Lim Boo Chang (Datuk Keramat). They will now be Independents but have declared their continued support for the BN.

Asked what would happen if the two joined MCA later as this would be against the BN spirit, Dr Mahathir said: "It is not against the BN spirit but the BN policy does not encourage any action that could weaken the grouping,"

-- BERNAMA

team/jm JK