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Three States prepare to swear in CM, MB

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Malacca Chief Minister will be sworn in tomorrow, the Perak Menteri Besar on Friday and the Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar by next week.

In Malacca, State Umno deputy chief Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam is expected to take his oath of office as the ninth Chief Minister before Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Syed Ahmad Shahabuddin tomorrow morning.

A spokesman for the State Protocol Department said the swearing-in ceremony would take place at Istana Melaka in Bukit Beruang at 9am.

The department held a meeting this morning, chaired by State Secretary Datuk Wira Abdul Aziz Omar, to discuss the preparations for the ceremony.

Mohd Ali, when met at his house in Bukit Katil, however, remained tight-lipped when asked about his appointment.

Saying the appointment of a CM was the prerogative of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, he asked the media to wait until tomorrow to confirm the speculation.

Out-going Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin will be moving to the Federal level after winning the Jasin parliamentary seat in the general election.

Mohd Ali, also the State Barisan Nasional deputy chairman, won the Paya Rumpat State seat after defeating DAP's Loh Ah Boo.

In Ipoh, the new Menteri Besar is expected to take his oath of office on Friday.

It is learnt that the Menteri Besar's office is making arrangement with the palace to fix the time for the ceremony.

The post fell vacant after Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib, who has held the position for more than 16 years, moved to the Pasir Salak parliamentary constituency from his traditional Kampung Gajah State seat.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob, who earlier held the Pasir Salak seat, was moved to the Parit parliamentary constituency where he was defeated by a Pas candidate.

It is understood that Dr Mahathir will announce the choice of the new Menteri Besar before Friday.

Political analysts believe that former Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali, who is the former Grik MP, will take over.

He was fielded in the State seat of Kenering (within the Grik parliamentary constituency) in the election.

In Seremban, the Negri Sembilan State Executive Council will be formed by next week at the latest, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad said.

Mohamed Isa said he had yet to meet Dr Mahathir to discuss the appointment of members.

"As in the past, I would normally discuss the appointment of members, especially concerning candidates from Umno, with Dr Mahathir," he said today.

Other component parties of the BN would send their list of proposed State Exco candidates to the Prime Minister and Mohamed Isa said he would be informed of it.

On whether there would be new faces among the members of the State Exco, he said this would depend on his meeting with Dr Mahathir.

In Klang, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar had an

audience with the Regent of Selangor Tengku Idris Shah today to inform him of the election results.

It was learnt that Abu Hassan also informed him of the State Executive Council line-up.

The State exco members are scheduled to be sworn in on Friday at Istana Alam Shah here.

However, Abu Hassan and State officials are keeping mum over who the new members are.

Speculation is rife that some major changes are expected and four new faces may be included in the 11-member line-up.

In Johor Baru, the new Johor State Executive Council is expected to be enlarged from eight to 10 members.

This is provided for under an amendment to the Johor Constitution to provide for two additional seats in the State Exco, passed by the State Legislative Assembly in August 1996.

The enlarged State Exco effectively means that the MIC and Gerakan, which do not have any representative in the Executive Council, may be given seats this time.

Both parties now have two representatives each in the State Assembly.

Of the current eight Johor Executive Council members, two are from the MCA and the others from Umno.

However, three of the Umno seats have fallen vacant as Datuk Sabariah Ahmad (Agriculture and Rural Development) was not re-nominated and two others - Datuk Kadir Annuar (Religious Affairs) and Dr Abdul Latiff Ahmad (Culture, Youth and Sports) - contested for parliamentary seats.

Johor also needs a new State Assembly Speaker as the incumbent, Datuk Mohd Ali Hassan, is now the MP for Tebrau.

Datuk Zainalabidin Zin (Works and Public Utilities) is expected to be made the new Speaker.

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