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Foreign CEO possible: PM

THE Government is expected to name a new chairman for Malaysia Airlines to replace Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli, and possibly also appoint a foreign chief executive officer/managing director upon reaching agreement to buy back control of the national carrier.

"At the moment, he (Tajudin) has the controlling stake so he has been given the right to manage... if we want control, we have to buy his shares," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

Asked by reporters whether the Government has any objection to MAS appointing a foreigner as its chief executive officer, Dr Mahathir said local companies, big and small, already have a tendency to bring in strategic partners and even foreign managers. "It is a possibility. I am not saying that it has been decided."

The post has been vacant since Datuk Wan Malek Ibrahim opted for early retirement in February 1999.

Last Thursday, Business Times quoted Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik as saying a new chairman and a foreign CEO would be appointed by MAS. The minister denied the report the following day, clarifying "...nothing has been finalised".

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