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`MB issue is closed' (HL)

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LANGKAWI, Sat. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said all quarters, particularly the Opposition, should stop blowing up the resignation of Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar as Selangor Menteri Besar as the matter is considered closed.

More so, said the Prime Minister, when Abu Hassan's resignation was not political but personal.

"We consider it closed unless there are people who purposely want (to create more issues) ... I do not know.

"The Opposition always has issues, that is its job," he said when met by reporters after visiting the hardstand for yachts and Crystal Village in Pulau Rebak.

The Umno president was asked to comment on the Opposition's action of harping on Abu Hassan's resignation.

Announcing on Thursday his decision to step down from the post, Abu Hassan had cited health and the need to devote more time to his family as the reasons.

He has been the Menteri Besar for three years and two months.

There have been a lot of speculations on Abu Hassan's sudden resignation, following the distribution of poison-pen letters and a report in the Java Post in Indonesia alleging his involvement in a sex scandal.

Berita Harian reported yesterday that several Opposition Assemblymen challenged Abu Hassan in the State Assembly sitting on Monday to explain the allegations in the poison-pen letters to clear his name.

Asked by a reporter whether Abu Hassan should undergo a DNA test to clear his name, Dr Mahathir said:

"I do not think so ... that is his problem.

"It is not for the party to look into. He wanted to resign, so he resigned."

Dr Mahathir also said there would be no by-election in Selangor as Abu Hassan only resigned as the Menteri Besar and not as Permatang State Assemblyman.

On Abu Hassan's successor, Dr Mahathir said it would be announced very soon.

Yesterday, Selangor Umno submitted to Dr Mahathir the names of 11 State Assemblymen who are the potential candidates to succeed Abu Hassan.

The list excluded former Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib and Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Dr Shafie Mohd Salleh, both of whom were among those initially tipped to take over the post.

The drawback to appointing Muhammad or Shafie is that neither is a member of the State Legislative Assembly, hence the need to hold a by-election if either one is chosen as Menteri Besar.

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