

21/04/2000

No decision yet on next BNM governor

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says the Government has not yet decided on who the next Bank Negara governor will be when Tan Sri Ali Abul Hassan Sulaiman's contract expires at the end of the month.

"We will have to look at it. I will have to have a discussion with Tun Daim," he said at a press conference after launching the Malaysian Unit Trust Week in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Dr Mahathir was asked if a decision has been made on who will replace Ali. Asked if any names have been suggested, he said: "There are several names but I am not going to reveal them."

A New Straits Times report on Wednesday quoted sources saying that former Second Finance Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, central bank advisor Datuk Nor Mohamed Yakcop, deputy governor Datuk Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz and Maybank managing director Datuk Amirsham Aziz are likely contenders for the post.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said a change in the Bank Negara governor will not necessarily lead to a change in the central bank's policy.

"Bank Negara policy now closely follows the Government's policy. Just because we change the governor does not mean there will be a change in policy," he said.

Asked whether Mustapa has spoken to him following reports that he is the first choice for the new Bank Negara governor post, Dr Mahathir said: "He has not met with me. I don't know if he has met with Daim."

When asked on whether the Government is opposed to Naluri Bhd selling part of its stake in Malaysia Airlines to a foreign party, the Prime Minister said the Government wants the national carrier to remain under Malaysian control.

It was reported that under a proposed debt restructuring, Naluri Bhd would sell part of its stake in Malaysia Airlines to foreign investors.

"I believe Naluri has denied it is going to sell. Of course we want to retain control of Malaysia Airlines in Malaysia. As long as we remain in control, I suppose we can sell some shares.

"But what is important is that the national identity of the airline remains. If they need to improve, they can have alliances with other airlines," Dr Mahathir added.

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