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Three for MB's post (HL)

Annie Freeda Cruetz; Ramlan Said

KLANG, Wed. - The number of potential candidates being considered to take over as Selangor Menteri Besar has been whittled down to three from the list of 11 proposed by the State Umno.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is believed to have discussed the three names with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah at Istana Negara in Kuala Lumpur today.

Umno sources said the three were the Deputy Menteri Besar Datuk Dr Zainal Abidin Ahmad, State Housing, Local Government and Squatters committee chairman Datuk Mohd Mokhtar Ahmad Dahalan and State Rural Development, Agriculture and Fisheries committee chairman Datuk Raja Ideris Raja Ahmad.

However, there is no clear indication yet as to whether one of them would definitely be picked to be the 13th Menteri Besar of Selangor following the resignation of Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar last Thursday after having served in the post for three years and two months.

It is also not certain whether this was the final shortlist or if there were others being considered from the 11 names submitted to Dr Mahathir at Putrajaya last Friday by Selangor Umno Deputy Liaison Committee chairman Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib.

Among the others proposed were State Entrepreneur Development and Small and Medium scale Industry committee chairman Datuk Abdul Fatah Iskandar, State Infrastructure and Information and Information Technology committee chairman Datuk Mohd Sharif Jajang, Deputy State Assembly speaker Datuk Salamon Selamat, Selat Kelang State Assemblyman Datuk Zakaria @ Zainal Md Deros, Selayang Baru State Assemblyman Datuk Ahmad Bhari Abd Rahman, Puchong State Assemblyman Datuk Mohamad Satim Diman, Hulu Bernam State Assemblyman Datuk Mohamed Idris Abu Bakar and Batang Kali State Assemblyman Datuk Zainal Abidin Sakom.

The political scene is abuzz with talk concerning the emergence of dark-horses, particularly Beranang State Assemblyman Ahamad Kuris Mohd Nor, 43. Several callers who have been closely following the New Straits Times on the latest developments in Selangor were curious to know more about him, especially his background.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Dr Mahathir had discussed the appointment of the new Menteri Besar with him.

"Yes, we have met on the matter but the decision and announcement will be made by the Prime Minister."

Speaking after the Umno management committee meeting at Menara Datuk Onn, Abdullah, who is party deputy president, said the selection of the new man to lead Selangor would not pose any problem as besides submitting a list of potential candidates, the State Umno had also pledged its support to whoever chosen by Dr Mahathir.

On the criteria of a Menteri Besar sought by the party, Abdullah said he should be one with integrity and leadership qualities.

On the possibility of him making the announcement as the Prime Minister is leaving for overseas on Saturday, Abdullah said: "I don't know about that but anything is possible. So it is better for everybody to wait."

It is possible the Prime Minister may leave the task of making the announcement to his deputy. If this is so, then the announcement could be made by Abdullah on Saturday, the day after Dr Mahathir leaves for

Mozambique to attend the South African International Dialogue.  
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