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New task for Hamid Othman?

SIK, Thurs. - Datuk Paduka Dr Abdul Hamid Othman is likely to be affected in the coming Cabinet reshuffle. The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department is likely to be appointed adviser to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Sources said Abdul Hamid, who is Sik Umno division chief, had informed Sik Umno division leaders at a meeting held at the division's office here that he would be involved in the Cabinet reshuffle.

Several leaders met at a Hari Raya gathering at Kampung Betong, Jeneri, confirmed this.

They said Abdul Hamid would be appointed as Islamic affairs and political adviser to the PM.

Dr Mahathir is expected to announce the reshuffle after he returns from his visit to Myanmar on Tuesday. The reshuffle is expected despite Dr Mahathir's earlier statement that the reshuffle was merely speculation fuelled by the appointment of Umno executive secretary Tengku Datuk Adnan Tengku Mansor as a Senator.

On Dec 18, Dr Mahathir gave additional hints of imminent changes in Government including the appointment of parliamentary secretaries. The PM did not discount the possibility that the post of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Information Ministry, now vacant, would be filled.

It has been speculated that Senator Datuk Zainuddin Maidin will be appointed to the post.

Abdul Hamid lost the Sik parliamentary seat to Pas life member Datuk Shahnor Ahmad in last year's general election. He was later appointed a Senator.

When approached for confirmation, Abdul Hamid said it was the prerogative of the PM to appoint or drop anyone from his Cabinet. "I leave it to the Prime Minister to decide on my position."

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