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LEAD MAHATHIR-MEDIA

DR MAHATHIR: I HAVE NOT DECIDED ON SECOND FINANCE MINISTER

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has brushed off speculation that he has appointed former Bank Negara governor, Tan Sri Ali Abul Hassan Sulaiman to be the Second Finance Minister.

"I wasn't aware of this until you asked," he said when asked by a reporter to comment on a news agency report that Ali was chosen for the job after chairing the Barisan Nasional Supreme council meeting here today.

Dr Mahathir also chided the media, saying that they seem to know better than him.

"I also want to say that I did not take a four-wheeler with somebody to the Karak Highway .

"I think these people should not be running any magazines or papers at all if they are so lacking in news (so much so) that they have to fabricate," he said.

Dr Mahathir was referring to a report by a regional-based business magazine that he had taken a former minister from prison for a secret hour-long meeting on political reconciliation during a car ride along the Karak Highway. -- BERNAMA

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