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NO DECISION YET ON SECOND FINANCE MINISTER, SAYS DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 23 (Bernama) -- The 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 as the Second Finance Minister.

"I wasn't aware of this until you asked," he told reporters after chairing the Barisan Nasional Supreme council meeting here today.

When asked to comment on a news agency report that Ali was chosen for the job, Dr Mahathir chided the media, saying that they seemed to know better than him.

Dr Mahathir is currently holding the finance portfolio.

"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.

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SHO MR RYN