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MAHATHIR-MAS

BE CAUTIOUS IN APPOINTING FOREIGNER TO HEAD MAS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 29 (Bernama) -- Any move to appoint a foreigner to head Malaysia Airlines (MAS) must be done cautiously, particularly after having gauged response on whether or not he will be accepted, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"You have to test the water first," the former prime minister said when met after delivering his keynote address, "The Thinking of a Thinker", at a seminar organised by the International Islamic University on Thinking here today.

"One needs to figure out the possible reaction before putting his ideas into action on whether the people would accept it or not," he said in response to recent reports that Malaysia Airlines was headhunting for a foreigner.

"Perhaps all the national companies should be allowed to be run by a foreigner. Then, I think we should have a different definition of a national," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there was currently a local transportation company being headed by a foreigner and the company "was not doing that much of a good job either".

To national companies likely to be headed by foreigners, he said: "I wish all of them good luck."

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was reported to have said that he wanted a Malaysian to head MAS but was willing to consider a foreigner as a temporary measure if there was no Malaysian capable of heading it.

Abdullah said he did not think Malaysians were incapable of heading MAS and left the decision to the national carrier to find the right candidate.

"But I am sure there are many Malaysians who are capable," he said after attending the inaugural convocation of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman yesterday. -- BERNAMA

SM MKO MR LC