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Mahathir-MAS

DR M: BE CAUTIOUS IN APPOINTING FOREIGNER TO HEAD MAS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 29 (Bernama) -- Any move to appoint a foreigner to head Malaysia Airlines (MAS) must be done cautiously, particularly after having gauged the response on whether he was acceptable, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

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

"One needs to figure out the possible reaction before putting his ideas into action on whether the people will accept it or not," he said in response to recent reports that MAS was head-hunting 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 said yesterday 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 running the airline.

Abdullah said he did not think Malaysians were incapable of heading MAS but was leaving the decision to the management of the national carrier to find the right candidate.

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

-- BERNAMA

SM MKO MR LC TOM