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Dr M: New Petronas CEO must be from within

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SHAH ALAM: The new Petroliam Nasional Bhd (Petronas) chief executive officer (CEO) must be from within the conglomerate to ensure continuity, said company adviser Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

This was also necessary because the new CEO would be familiar with the operations, he said.

"Most importantly, we have done business with so many countries. We know heads of governments and an entirely new person will find difficulty in establishing contact with the people we are doing business with," he added.

The three candidates identified to fill the position vacated by Tan Sri Mohd Hassan Marican were from within, and given this, they knew the company well, Dr Mahathir said when

met during his visit to the I-City headquarters.

Hassan is also president of the national oil company.

Speculation is rife the three candidates shortlisted to succeed Hassan are Datuk Shamsul Azhar Abbas, Datuk Anuar Ahmad and Datuk Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin.

He said there would also be resentment from within the company if an outsider were appointed to the position.

However, Dr Mahathir said the chairman could be someone from outside. "We have a chairman and a president so that we can have checks and balances. If the president is given too much power, there may be problems. "That's why we have a chairman, I don't know who would be selected to be the chairman," he said.

(The chairman's position fell vacant following the death of Tan Sri Azizan



i-Bhd CEO Eu Hong Chew (left) briefing Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Tan Sri Law Hieng Ding on the company's projects.

Zainul Abidin in 2004.)

Asked why Hassan's contract had not been extended, Dr Mahathir said it could be due to the fact that Hassan

had reached retirement age.

"He has been there for a long time and one has to retire, even if you are very good," he said.