

## **List of cabinet members decided in principle by PM**

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PUTRAJAYA, May 14 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the list of names of the Cabinet Ministers and the portfolios they would lead will be decided by him as the Prime Minister in principle.

He said the Pakatan Harapan component parties had submitted the names of the Cabinet members and the ministries selected.

"I will confirm who will be holding posts and the portfolios they will hold. There is a possibility that I will again meet the party leaders (in Pakatan Harapan) but the principle is that I, as the Prime Minister, will make the final decision," he said at a packed media conference at the Perdana Leadership Foundation, here today.

Dr Mahathir said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail had submitted the proposed names from Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) and their respective portfolios in the Cabinet during a meeting with him (Dr Mahathir) today.

"They (PKR) submitted 10 names although they were requested to submit three. Among the 10 names, the priority is for the first core Cabinet which is a Cabinet of 10 members," he said.

Dr Mahathir said another party that also submitted names for Cabinet members was Amanah which sent three names.

He said Amanah president Mohamad Sabu did not meet him but instead sent a list of three names by letter.

Asked on the announcement last Saturday regarding DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng who was named Finance Minister whereas he was still facing a charge at the Penang High Court, Dr Mahathir said Lim was only named and had not been sworn-in.

"He (Lim) is not a minister yet until he is sworn-in," he added.

Dr Mahathir said every minister appointed must be someone who is eligible to become one and if there is a case (against him), he could not be appointed as a minister.

"We have to follow the rule of law, if he is eligible to be a minister, (then) he can be. But if the law says until he is clear from any charges or something then only he can be a minister, we will wait," Dr Mahathir said.

Asked whether Lim could be sworn-in as the Finance Minister now, the Prime Minister said a report must be obtained first to determine whether he could take the oath or otherwise.

Asked if this meant that the court had to clear Lim, Prime Minister replied: "I will follow the rule of law."

Asked if the Pakatan Harapan would table a new budget after 100 days and after the Team of Eminent Persons had submitted theirs, Dr Mahathir said the Team of Eminent Persons was looking into the mid-term budget.

"But I have already instructed the Ministry of Finance to look closely at the budget to determine priorities, the needs etc. Because our (Pakatan Harapan\'s) hope is that we can reduce expenditure by the government to the amount of money available," he added.

The Prime Minister said the core Cabinet comprising 10 ministers was expected to be announced this week while the remaining 15 ministers would be announced as soon as possible.

Asked about who was looking after the Finance Ministry now, Dr Mahathir said, at the moment the Finance Ministry's officials reported to him.

"But we (the government) have a panel that looks into the work of the Finance Ministry and some work can be carried out and some can wait for the minister's appointment," he added.

Asked about the size of the civil service, the prime minister said they would not be reduced, instead the government would look for a way for them to continue working but in different agencies like the time the government was downsizing (during his administration previously) where government officials were transferred from the public to the private sectors.

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