

MINISTER'S RANK FOR DAIM

Ex-Finance Minister to lead team on northern growth triangle

By Wong Chun Wai

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Former Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin will be given ministerial status, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said Tun Daim would also lead a Malaysian delegation in talks with Indonesia and Thailand on the formation of a northern growth triangle.

Dr Mahathir said Tun Daim was also help-

ing the Government in developing Labuan and Langkawi, among other tasks.

Tun Daim is chairman of the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) and the Special Task Force Committee for the Development of Labuan.

Dr Mahathir said conferring someone with ministerial status was not new.

"Datuk Musa Hitam has ministerial status as well," he told newsmen after chairing a four-hour Umno supreme council meeting.

Datuk Musa, the former Deputy Prime Minister, is Malaysia's special representative to the United Nations.

Dr Mahathir said former Welfare Minister Datuk Mustaffa Muhammad, who is now the Malaysian High Commissioner to Brunei, had ministerial status too.

According to Umno secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, the northern growth triangle will involve the northern peninsula states, northern Sumatra and southern Thailand.

He said the ministerial status would empower Tun Daim to make decisions on behalf of the Government and he would have official

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status when negotiating with Thailand and Indonesia.

Tun Daim was appointed Finance Minister in 1983.

In March, he was replaced by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in a Cabinet reshuffle after he had expressed his desire to resign two months earlier.

Dr Mahathir also said the supreme council decided that an economic congress for bumiputras be organised by the Government in December.

He said such a congress was necessary as the National Development Policy (NDP) stressed on the quality and not the quantity of bumiputra participation in the economy.

Dr Mahathir also said the supreme council had approved certain proposals to amend the party constitution for tabling at the Umno general assembly in November.

He said it has been proposed that the chairman and vice-chairman of Umno Youth and Wanita be elected.

"We have also agreed that amendments be made to allow the appointment of three more supreme council members," he said.

He also said the party had received the applications of Machang MP Ahmad Shukri Haji Hassan and former Kelantan Semangat secretary Kassim Mohamed to join Umno.

Dr Mahathir said newly-appointed supreme council member Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun was sworn in today.