

Mustapha made

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SHAH ALAM, Wed. — The Cabinet today appointed Sabah Umno deputy liaison chief Tun Datu Mustapha Harun, 75, as Minister for Sabah Affairs.

With the appointment of the MP for Limbawang, Sabah now has two Cabinet Ministers, the other being Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai who is the Land and Co-operative Development Minister.

This was announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad this evening.

Dr Mahathir said Mustapha is a veteran knowledgeable about the "peculiarities of Sabah's problems".

"Sabah is posing a lot of problems. Tun Mustapha knows what the situation is and as a Minister he will have much more clout there," he told a Press conference after officiating at the construction of the Proton casting plant at the Hi-com-Glenmarie industrial park here.

Dr Mahathir said the appointment could not be said to be permanent "but the situation demands that somebody pays attention to Sabah".

Mustapha, who is also the State Assemblyman for Usukan, joined Umno in 1991.

He held the post of Federal Minister for Sabah Affairs and Civil Defence for 10 months before resigning in April 1967 to contest in the first direct Sabah elections the same month.

The founder and former president of Usno led the Sabah Alliance to victory and became the Chief Minister. He was the State's chief executive until Usno lost power in the 1976 State election.

He was offered the post of

Minister

Defence Minister by then Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein in 1974 but Mustapha rejected it.

In Petaling Jaya, Mustapha said his primary task as the new Minister for Sabah Affairs was to promote unity among the people and bring development to the State.

He said he would strive to ensure better relations between the State and Federal Governments.

In expressing his gratitude to Dr Mahathir for appointing him, he said he would do his best despite his age.

"I thank the Prime Minister for his confidence in me. It is a heavy portfolio but I will carry out my duties to the best of my ability. I will try not to let him down," he told reporters at his house in Jalan Tanjung.

Mustapha said although rumours had been rife in Sabah that he would be made a Federal Minister, the appointment still came as a surprise to him.

"I heard about it over the 6 o'clock news. Dr Mahathir

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