

CNS3819

U GE 20-05 00173 EB876

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LEAD Mustapha-seat

TUN DATU MUSTAPHA NEED NOT VACATE STATE SEAT, SAYS PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, May 20⁹³ (Bernama) -- Prime Minister ²Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Tun Datu Mustapha Harun need not vacate his Usukan state seat to be a Cabinet minister.

"It is not a must that Tun Mustapha resign as a state assemblyman," he said when asked to comment on the matter after opening a seminar on the role of private hospitals, here.

Yesterday he announced that the Cabinet had appointed Mustapha as Minister for Sabah Affairs, a post that Mustapha had held 27 years ago, to handle the affairs of the state.

Asked about the appointment of support staff for the ministry like the secretary-general, he said it would be done according to normal procedure.

However, Dr Mahathir said that for the moment he did not see the need for the post of deputy minister for the new ministry. -- more

JO JK

▼20/05/13-53MST

CNS3827

U GE 20-05 00166 EB877

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LEAD Mustapha-seat 2 Kuala Lumpur

Asked whether the post would be a permanent one, he said: "It would depend on the need because we are not bound by rigid rules."

He said, for example, that in the past the country did not have a special ministry to look after tourism or domestic trade.

On the possibility of appointing a minister to administer Kelantan's affairs, he said the job was currently being done by Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Annuar Musa.

On the statement of Mustapha's son, Sabah Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Datu Amirkahar, that his father was a window dressing for the federal Cabinet, the prime minister said Amirkahar was the one who had been used as a window dressing.

"He is the one who has become the window dressing with payment. The salary is increased and then he is offered the post of minister," said Dr Mahathir. -- more

JO JK

▼20/05/14-11MST

CNS3842

U GE 20-05 00207 EB879

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LEAD Mustapha-seat 3 Kuala Lumpur

Asked to comment on a press report today that the United States wanted formal trade links between the North American Free Trade Area and the Asean Free Trade Area, he said he had to study the details to know what exactly the links were.

Malaysia would agree if the links were beneficial, he said.

According to the report, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Winston Lord had raised the matter at the annual discussions between Asean and the US in Brunei last week.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar said Mustapha need not vacate his state seat as there was no law requiring him to do so.

"However it is normal practice for one to do so when one is appointed a Cabinet minister," he told reporters after launching the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Trade and Industry Arbitration Tribunal, here.

Syed Hamid cited the example of Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, the Kota Samarahan MP and Asa Jaya assemblyman, who did not vacate his state seat after his appointment. -- more

ES MTA JK

▼20/05/14-37MST

CNS3845

U GE 20-05 00189 EB880

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LEAD Mustapha-seat 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

He said Mustapha's appointment was a recognition by the federal government that Mustapha, who is also Sabah Umno Liaison Committee deputy chairman, still had an important role to play in ensuring development in the state.

He believed the appointment would help the federal government give more emphasis to problems in the state.

"I hope he can bring Sabah into the mainstream of economic development," he said.

Yesterday Mustapha said he would focus on rural development in discharging his duties as minister, adding that priority should be given to those in the rural areas as they had been neglected since Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) left the Barisan Nasional (BN).

Syed Hamid said the time had come for the federal government to emphasise economic matters as all this while the PBS had concentrated on political affairs.

On Datu Amirkahar's that Mustapha's appointment was a "window dressing", Syed Hamid said: "Actually the PBS has made Amirkahar a window dressing. I feel he is regretting it now."

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