

# PM:, Mustapha need not quit as Assemblyman

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Sabah Umno deputy liaison chief Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun does not have to step down as a State Assemblyman following his appointment yesterday to the Cabinet as Minister for Sabah Affairs, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"It is not necessary," he said in reply to a question at a Press-conference on whether Mustapha had to resign as State Assemblyman now that he is a Federal Minister. Dr Mahathir had earlier opened the two-

day National Health Care Conference at a leading hotel here.

Mustapha, 75, is State Assemblyman for Usukan and MP for Limbawang.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir announced Mustapha's appointment to the new Cabinet post, saying that as a veteran from Sabah, he was knowledgeable about the "peculiarities of Sabah problems".

Asked whether the Ministry would be a permanent one, the Prime Minister said it could either be permanent or temporary, "depending

on the situation", adding that no Ministry was permanent.

"We did not have a Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry. Now, because there is a need for one, we have one. And we did not have a Ministry dealing with consumer affairs, we have that now."

Dr Mahathir said: "We are not tied down by rigid conditions."

On whether Mustapha would have a deputy, he said at the moment he saw no need for one.

Asked whether there would be a Ministry set up

to look into Kelantan affairs in view of the fact that the State, like Sabah, is under opposition rule; Dr Mahathir pointed out that Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Annuar Musa, who is also a senator, was in charge of Kelantan.

Asked to comment on the statement by Mustapha's son Datu Amirkahar that his father should not have accepted the appointment which he described as a mere "decoration" and not made sincerely, the Prime Minister remarked: "... he is the one that is a decoration

... gets a salary increase and an offer to be Minister."

In Kota Kinabalu, Sabah Legislative Assembly secretary Datuk Francis Yap said Mustapha's appointment would result in a by-election for the Usukan State seat.

Yap said Mustapha was required to vacate his Usukan State seat following his appointment to the Federal Cabinet as provided for under Article 43 (8) of the Federal Constitution.

He added that a by-election for the seat must be held within 60 days after the

seat had been declared vacant.

Mustapha won the Usukan seat in the 1990 State election under a Usno-Barisan Nasional ticket defeating six other contenders, including one from the Parti Bersatu Sabah.

In a by-election in May, 1991, Mustapha, who was forced to vacate the seat under the State anti-party hopping law after he left Usno to join Umno, retained the seat beating his sole opponent, Encik Jap Omar of the PBS, by a majority of 2,492 votes.