

# Mustapa pledges to do his best

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, who was named Second Finance Minister yesterday, pledged to discharge his duties to the best of his abilities and to help Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the ministry's work.

Mustapa, who is also Entrepreneur Development Minister, described the appointment as an honour for him and thanked Dr Mahathir for it.

"I was surprised by the appointment," he said in a brief statement.

Mustapa said he had been briefed by the ministry's secretary-general on the role and jurisdiction of the ministry.

"I will at the same time continue to carry on with my duties as Entrepreneur Development Minister," he added.

Cabinet ministers and mentris besar welcomed the appointments as appropriate and timely.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik described Mustapa as one of the most qualified people to be in the Finance

Ministry.

In welcoming the appointment, Dr Ling who is MCA president, said Mustapa was a "well-trained" economist.

"He has worked in the Finance Ministry before, including under former Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin," he told reporters after launching 11 all-woman MCA branches at a dinner function in Butterworth last night.

"He will be able to give the greatest support Dr Mahathir needs to overcome the country's economic problems," he added.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said Mustapa had previously served as Special Officer in the Finance Ministry and political secretary to then Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin.

"He has also served as deputy minister and parliamentary secretary, therefore he has a lot of experience," Sabbaruddin said.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk

Seri Rafidah Aziz said Mustapa's appointment would ensure a follow-through on the country's financial management.

"We welcome the appointment. At least now there will be somebody substantive to do the work.

"The Prime Minister already has so much to do," she said.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said with his vast experience, Mustapa could work closely to assist Dr Mahathir to revive the economy.

Perlis Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said Mustapa had a sound background in economics and was capable of handling his new duties.

Pahang Mentri Besar Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said the appointments were in tune with the present situation.

"Two ministers holding the post is most proper, in view of the present economic situation," he said yesterday.

Khalil also said he knew Mustapa to be a very methodical person.