

24 JUN 1998

Mahathir-Daim

MAHATHIR: DAIM'S APPOINTMENT TO EXPLAIN NEAC'S DECISIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, June 24 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight the appointment of Tun Daim Zainuddin as the Special Functions Minister in the Prime Minister's Department was to enable him to explain to the Cabinet decisions taken by the National Economic Action Council (NEAC).

He said many decisions and studies carried out by the NEAC which are tabled to the Cabinet needed explanation.

Being a Minister, Daim could explain to the Cabinet members, he told reporters after a reception with the staff of the Umno headquarters at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

Dr Mahathir said Daim's duties would not overlap with other ministries such as Finance, International Trade and Industry and Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs.

Daim is the executive director of NEAC, a body specially set up to advise the government on ways to tide over the economic slowdown.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Department said today that Daim has been appointed Special Functions Minister in the Prime Minister's Department responsible for matters relating to economic development.

Dr Mahathir said Daim would focus his attention solely on the economic problems faced by the country and his duties would not overlap with the functions of the other ministries.

He said Daim's appointment was also to facilitate his (Dr Mahathir's) appointments while abroad like meeting ministers from other countries.

" As NEAC executive director, we find that it is difficult for Daim to discharge his duties because if we send him overseas, he cannot meet ministers but can only meet officers as he is not of a minister's status," he said.

Asked what would be Daim's main duties, Dr Mahathir said he would handle all matters pertaining to the economic problems.

He said Daim would have his own ministry and staff under the Prime Minister's Department.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno President, said the 52nd Umno General Assembly went on smoothly without any hitches.

Although there were talk before the assembly that there would be trouble, the assembly proceeded orderly.

He said the party headquarters had made thorough preparations to ensure there was no untoward incidents.

Dr Mahathir also thanked the staff of the Umno headquarters, PWTC, police and the mass media for carrying out their tasks efficiently.

Also present were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and Umno secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik.

-- BERNAMA

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