

10/09/1998

Mustapa gets down to work immediately

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Second Finance Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed got down to work immediately when he turned up at the Finance Ministry today, where he first served 24 years ago.

Soon after attending the weekly Cabinet meeting, Mustapa went to the ministry's office at the Government complex in Jalan Duta.

Mustapa, who is also Entrepreneur Development Minister, was appointed Second Finance Minister on Monday following last week's expulsion of Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has assumed the post of First Finance Minister.

"I'm here to meet the senior officials here...", Mustapa said when met at the Finance Ministry lobby this afternoon.

Asked what his scope of responsibilities would be, Mustapa said that there was none.

"I am assisting the Prime Minister in carrying out the duties.

"Matters like preparing the Budget, tabling of the Budget would be done by the Prime Minister ... I am only assisting him."

Asked on developments into the list of privatised projects awarded to companies and the identities of the principal shareholders, Mustapa said: "That would be a matter looked into by the Prime Minister."

At the Umno assembly last June, two lists containing privatised projects and the companies which won them were made public.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, had said then the lists were released in response to allegations that the Government had practised cronyism and nepotism in awarding contracts.

It was understood the then Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was also to have made public a similar list from the Treasury.

On the data obtained for the lists, Dr Mahathir had said that the information was obtained by his office from agencies such as the Economic Planning Unit with input from the State EPUs, the Finance Ministry, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and the Entrepreneur Development Ministry.

Mustapa's association with the Finance ministry goes back to 1974 when he began his career at the Treasury as an assistant secretary.

After 10 years, he was appointed special assistant to the then Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin.

He later became Daim's political secretary and in March 1991 was appointed a senator, later becoming the Finance Ministry's Parliamentary Secretary.

Mustapa was appointed Deputy Finance Minister in 1994, and after winning the Jeli parliamentary seat in the 1995 general election he became Entrepreneur Development Minister.

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