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Leaders: Appointments will strengthen administration

PENANG, Tues. - Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said today the appointments of Datuk Mustapa Mohamed as Second Finance Minister and Tan Sri Ali Abul Hassan Sulaiman as Bank Negera Governor will strengthen the financial administration of the Government.

Describing their appointments as "appropriate", Koh said in a statement that both men were well-trained economists with sound knowledge and extensive administrative experience.

In congratulating them, he expressed confidence that they would do a good job in assisting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad "in the national effort for economic recovery".

"Ali Abul Hassan comes from Penang, and Mustapa also has a good knowledge about Penang because he has worked closely with the State Government in his previous and present capacities."

Koh believed their "knowledge about Penang and close relationship" with the State Government would bring about more development to benefit Penang residents.

In Kota Baru, Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat believed that Mustapa, with his vast experience, would assist the Government in reviving the economy.

"Being a Kelantan-born, I cannot hide my happiness (with Mustapa's appointment) and I hope there will be no more problems," he said.

Speaking after presenting certificates to students from the Maahad Dakwah Wal-Imamah in Nilam Puri, Nik Aziz said Mustapa, who is MP for Jeli, has demonstrated his capability in looking after the interests of the people.

"Since holding the post of Entrepreneur Development Minister, there has been various activities carried out for the people," he added.

In Malacca, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin said Mustapa and Ali Abul Hassan were the right choices as Second Finance Minister and Bank Negera Governor respectively.

"Mustapa has the right qualifications, credentials and experience to handle the job in the Finance Ministry.

"Hopefully, he and Ali Abul Hassan would work together and help devise a way to hasten the economic recovery."

Abu Zahar also added that Ali Abul Hassan also had the credentials and experience as the former director-general of the Economic Planning Unit and secretary of the National Economic Action Council.

In Ipoh, deputy president of the Perak branch of Malay Chamber of Commerce, Muhammad Muhiyuddin Abdullah, said Mustapa was a capable administrator considering his experience as Entrepreneur Development Minister for the past three years.

This, he said, had given Mustapa an edge in dealing with problems among businessmen.

Muhiyuddin said as Mustapa had also served as Deputy Finance Minister in 1994, he had excellent credentials and would be able to give extra input to the NEAC and help speed economic recovery.

In Kuala Lumpur, the Malay Chamber of Commerce of Malaysia president Syed Amin Al-Jeffri said they were the right choices for the job.

Their expertise would come in handy to redeem the country from the economic doldrums quickly, he said in a statement.

He said by holding the two portfolios, Mustapa would be in a better

position to help small and medium scale entrepreneurs who had been badly hit by the economic slowdown.

Being the Second Finance Minister, Mustapa had the authority to ensure speedier disbursement of funds to Bumiputera businessmen to restart their businesses.

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