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Siti Zaharah made full Minister in PM's Department

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Wanita Umno chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman has been made a full Minister and not a Deputy.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad clarified today that when he announced the Cabinet reshuffle yesterday, he had inadvertently named Siti Zaharah as a Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

"Actually, her appointment is as Minister in the Prime Minister's Department," Dr Mahathir told reporters during a visit to the Immigration Department headquarters.

Siti Zaharah, 49, had been a Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department before - from 1986 to 1990.

Born in Lanchang, Mentakab, Pahang, her entry into national-level politics came in 1982 when she was elected Wanita executive council member. Five years later, she won a seat in the Umno supreme council.

In 1990, she moved to the Public Enterprises Ministry as Deputy Minister, and after the 1995 general election, was appointed Deputy Health Minister.

A year later, she became Wanita Umno chief, defeating incumbent Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz in the party elections.

Siti Zaharah received her early education at Sekolah Sultan Abu Bakar in Kuantan. She obtained her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the State University of New York in 1971 and four years later obtained her PhD (Educational Administration and Organisation Studies) from Cornell University.

She served as planning officer in the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka before her appointment as Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in 1986. She is the MP for Paya Besar.

Meanwhile, a statement from the Prime Minister's office said the Prime Minister has informed the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar of the reshuffle of Ministers and Deputy Ministers.

The changes involve:

- * Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who was appointed Deputy Prime Minister;
- * Tun Daim Zainuddin, who was appointed Finance Minister while retaining the post of Special Functions Minister;
- * Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, the Defence Minister, who has been made Foreign Minister;
- * Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapa who has been appointed Defence Minister. He is now Minister in the Prime Minister's Department,
- * Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali, the Deputy Home Minister, who has been appointed Minister in the Prime Minister's Department;
- * Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman who is now full Minister; and,
- * Senator Datuk Ibrahim Ali who was appointed Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

It added that the King had consented to the appointment of Tajol Rosli and Siti Zaharah as full Ministers, and to Ibrahim's appointment as Deputy Minister.

Their appointments will take effect after they are sworn in before the King at Istana Negara at 2.30pm on Tuesday.

For Ministers and Deputy Ministers who have been given new portfolios, the changes take effect on Monday.

They need not be sworn in as they had already taken the oath at the time

of their appointments as Ministers or Deputy Ministers, the statement said.

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