

19/04/2000

Next Bank Negara governor: Mustapa on the list

Shamsul Akmar

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Former Second Finance Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed heads a list of candidates to succeed Tan Sri Ali Abul Hassan Sulaiman who retires as governor of Bank Negara at the end of the month.

The other contenders are the central bank adviser Datuk Nor Mohamed Yakcop, deputy governor Datuk Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz and Malayan Banking Bhd managing director Datuk Amirsham Aziz.

However, sources said the only problem with the appointment of Mustapa is that he would have to give up his political career.

A first class honours economics graduate, Mustapa, who is vying for a supreme council seat in next month's Umno election, is said to be torn between his political career and taking up the coveted position.

If Mustapa, who is adviser to the Finance Ministry, is selected and accepts the appointment, he would have to relinquish all his political positions. He is a member of the Umno supreme council and head of the Umno Jeli division.

In the last general election, Mustapa failed to retain the Jeli parliamentary seat which he won in 1995.

The other three, Nor Mohamed, Dr Zeti and Amirsham, are candidates with strong economic credentials and vast experience in the financial sector.

Nor Mohamed was in fact a keen supporter of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's selective capital controls policy.

Zeti became the acting governor following the resignation of Tan Sri Ahmad Mohd Don in August 1998.

Ali became governor of the central bank on Sept 16, 1998 with Zeti as the deputy.

Amirsham is noted for his impressive leadership in ensuring that Maybank remains a major player in the local banking sector.

Ali was head of the Economic Planning Unit in the Prime Minister's Department before the Bank Negara appointment.

His one year contract was extended by six months. The six-month term expires at the end of this month and Ali, who underwent a bypass in 1997, is likely to be offered the chairmanship of a major government corporation.

(END)