

# PM takes charge

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Mahathir assumes finance  
and special functions posts

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By **Seema Viswanathan**

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**PUTRAJAYA**, Tues: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad took over as acting finance minister and acting special functions minister from today.

He told reporters at his office today he still has not decided on the replacement for Tun Daim Zainuddin, who resigned from the posts on June 1.

"I am still thinking. It must be somebody suitable to be minister of finance," Mahathir said.

ment would be, he said jokingly: "The (job application) forms have been sent out. I have finished the forms already."

He also quipped that a few thousand forms had been given out.

Asked if he had made a shortlist of possible candidates, he said: "No, I haven't yet. I'm still wide open, so any suggestions from the press will be welcomed."

Reiterating that he is now the acting finance minister, Mahathir quipped in jest: "If you want some money, write to me."

He said he wrote to the sec-

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Asked to comment on media speculation (*see Page 2*) on possible candidates, he said: "I don't know. I will look at the list."

Asked whether an appointment would be made before the Umno general assembly on June 20, he said: "*Insyah Allah* (God willing)."

He also confirmed that Daim had resigned from his other appointed posts, including that of Umno treasurer, also on June 1.

The prime minister said, however, that Daim did not resign as Merbok MP.

Mahathir was in a jovial mood as he joked with reporters intent on finding out who he will pick to fill the two portfolios.

Asked who the replace-

mentary of the Finance Ministry informing the latter that he had assumed the posts.

Since he was in a joking mood, a reporter asked if he was kidding about his earlier announcement, and he replied with a laugh: "No, you can't joke about these things."

Asked if he would appoint a finance minister before the upcoming pre-budget dialogues, Mahathir said: "Well, if I learn enough about finance I will be the minister who will be having the dialogues. At the moment I'm not confident yet."

Earlier, he launched a book *The Propagation of Islam in the Indonesian-Malay Archipelago* published by the Malaysian Sociological Research Institute.