

24 JUN 2003

Mahathir-Cabinet

CHAN KONG CHOY NAMED NEW TRANSPORT MINISTER

PUTRAJAYA, June 24 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today announced the appointment of MCA Deputy President and Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chan Kong Choy as the new Transport Minister, replacing Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik.

At a news conference in his office here, the prime minister said that Deputy Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen would replace Chan as Deputy Finance Minister with parliamentary secretary to the International Trade and Industry Ministry Datuk Fu Ah Kiow promoted to take over from Dr Ng.

Elaborating on Chan's promotion, he said: "It is my assessment of his ability . He also has a lot of experience."

As for Dr Ng's new job at the finance ministry, Dr Mahathir said it was in recognition of women's capabilities and proved that the government was not gender-biased.

The prime minister, who is also finance minister, said that there were many women officers at the finance ministry, including those involved in preparing the nation's budget.

"We like women," he quipped.

He said the appointments would take effect after obtaining the consent of Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamallulail.

The changes announced today also saw the promotion of parliamentary secretary to the Transport Ministry Datuk Donald Lim Siang Chai to deputy information minister and Ipoh Barat Member of Parliament Datuk Ho Cheong Sing as parliamentary secretary to the International Trade and Industry Ministry. Both are from the MCA.

Dr Mahathir was queried on whether the many MCA appointments signalled that the problems in the party, the second largest in the ruling coalition, Barisan Nasional, had been resolved.

To this, the prime minister said he did not discriminate against anybody and he did not recognise the so-called "Team A, Team B" which were previously involved in a power struggle in the MCA.

Chan was MCA vice-president until May 23 when the MCA central committee elected him as party deputy president.

The cabinet reshuffle followed Dr Ling's resignation as transport minister which was accepted by Dr Mahathir on May 28. He had held the post for 17 years.

Dr Mahathir also shifted Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk M. Kayveas to the Prime Minister's Department, also as deputy minister.

Kayveas will be deputy minister to Datuk Seri Rais Yatim, the minister in the prime minister's department who is in charge of law.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Douglas Unggah Embas is also involved in the changes and has been appointed deputy transport minister.

Uggah is the MP for Betong in Sarawak and is Youth Leader of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB).

Meanwhile, Arau Member of Parliament Datuk Mastika Junaidah Husin was appointed Women and Family Development Ministry parliamentary secretary.

Asked whether Kayveas's movement to the Prime Minister's Department was in recognition of his role in highlighting woes involving the local authorities, Dr Mahathir said it was just a "normal shifting".

Asked for his advice to the new line-up, the prime minister said that they must serve the government well, bearing in mind that they are members of the Barisan Nasional apart from their own parties.

"They must adhere to government policies and not announce their own policies that are not decided by the cabinet," he said.

-- BERNAMA

MAD MAM AU