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Chan made Transport Minister (HL)

Firdaus Abdullah

PUTRAJAYA, Tues. - MCA deputy president Datuk Chan Kong Choy has been appointed Transport Minister, replacing Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad also announced the promotion of MCA representatives, Datuk Fu Ah Kio as Deputy Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister and Datuk Donald Lim as Deputy Information Minister.

Dr Mahathir said at a Press conference at his office that he appointed Chan because of his ability and vast experience in the Government and politics.

Chan was Deputy Finance Minister while Fu was International Trade and Industry Ministry Parliamentary Secretary and Lim, Transport Ministry Parliamentary Secretary.

Dr Mahathir named Wanita MCA chief Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen to take over from Chan as Deputy Finance Minister II. She was Deputy Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister.

The two new faces are Ipoh Barat MCA Member of Parliament Datuk Ho Cheong Sing and Arau Umno MP Datuk Mastika Junaidah Husin.

Ho takes over from Fu as International Trade and Industry Ministry Parliamentary Secretary while Mastika Junaidah is Women and Family Development Ministry Parliamentary Secretary, a post that has been vacant since the ministry was set up.

Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk M. Kayveas has been made Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, under Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim who is in charge of legal affairs.

Datuk Douglas Uggah Embass, who was Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, is now Deputy Transport Minister.

The new line-up involves five representatives from MCA and one each from Umno, People's Progressive Party and Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu.

Dr Mahathir said that, except for Chan's appointment, the others' were with immediate effect. He said he had to seek the consent of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on Chan's appointment as a full minister.

"I have to report to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on the appointment of ministers."

On the appointment of Dr Ng as Deputy Finance Minister II which is considered an important position in the Government, Dr Mahathir said the Barisan Nasional Government did not practise gender bias.

"We like women, if they can perform they are entitled.

"As you know a lot of the senior officers in the Finance Ministry are women, the budget officers are women, so if they are able, we are not gender biased," Dr Mahathir, who is also Finance Minister, quipped.

Asked if he expected the shifting and appointment of MCA representatives would put a stop to the crisis in MCA, he said there was no more crisis in the Barisan Nasional's second largest coalition member.

"I think there is no more crisis in MCA now. We do not discriminate against anyone. We recognise MCA but not Team A, Team B, C, D and all that."

Asked on his advice to the newly-appointed members of the Government as Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional chairman, Dr Mahathir said they must respect and adhere to government policies at all times.

"My advice? Serve the Government well. They have to remember that they are members of the Barisan Nasional; apart from being members of their own

party they are also members of the BN.

"And as part of the Government they must adhere to the Government's policy, they may not make their own policies or announce their own policies, or announce things that have not been decided by the Cabinet."

The reshuffle today follows the resignation of Dr Ling as Transport Minister on May 28.

With the appointments today, the Transport and Information Ministries have two Deputy Ministers, while the post of another Deputy Minister of Housing and Local Government is left vacant for the time being.