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He's back for second stint

Dr Mahathir to be acting Education Minister for time being

PETALING JAYA: It is "back to school" for Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as he is now the acting Education Minister.

The move has been widely speculated following the resignation of Dr Maszlee Malik last week.

A statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office yesterday said the Cabinet, during its meeting on Jan 8, agreed that Dr Mahathir be made the acting minister.

"This decision is effective from Jan 3 and Dr Mahathir will be in acting capacity until the new Education Minister is appointed," according to the two-paragraph statement.

Dr Mahathir takes over the position from Maszlee who resigned from the post on Jan 2, just hours after he visited a few schools on the first day of the school year.

Several names have cropped up to fill up the post with Maszlee's resignation, including the Prime Minister becoming the acting education minister until he finds a proper replacement from Parti



Last word: It is Dr Mahathir's prerogative to decide on the next Education Minister.

Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia. Dr Mahathir and Maszlee are from Bersatu.

Dr Mahathir, who became Prime Minister following Pakatan Harapan winning the 14th General Election in May 2018, had then decided to take up the education portfolio.

That decision drew flak and he had to relinquish the post because

"it is the position of the Pakatan Harapan manifesto". The Pakatan manifesto Promise 12 stated that the Prime Minister will not simultaneously hold other ministerial posts, especially the post of Finance Minister.

Earlier this week, Dr Mahathir said the decision on who the new Education Minister will be would ultimately be his.

In announcing his resignation to the media, Maszlee said he was "advised" to do so by Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir had reportedly said there were "many reasons" Maszlee, who is a former International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) lecturer, was asked to step down.

Last weekend, a letter purportedly written by Dr Mahathir to Maszlee revealed that the latter had failed to heed Cabinet instructions and often put the government in difficult situations.

The Simpang Renggam MP had said that he had "returned the post to PM" during his press conference. During his 20-month tenure,

Maszlee courted much controversy with some of his takes on the national education system.

Among them were the inclusion of 1MDB in history textbooks and his comments linking the matriculation quota system with unequal job opportunities for bumiputra in the private sector.

He did bring some good to the education system such as the abolition of exams for Years One, Two and Three pupils.

He also lightened the burden faced by teachers as they no longer have to prepare and file multiple copies of documents such as classroom attendance and subject committee records.

On his next move, Maszlee has indicated his priority now would be to serve his constituents and to improve the standard of education in Johor.

Watch the video thestartv.com

