

'PM is best leader to hold Finance Minister's post'

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is the best leader to hold the Finance Minister's post, Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli tells Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

This is because the individual who is leading the Finance Ministry has a heavy responsibility to ensure matters pertaining to governance and procurement are carried out in a transparent manner, he added.

He said for the unity government, the duty of rejuvenating the national economy lies not only with the Finance Ministry but is shared among the relevant ministries and all ministers, which is unlike the practice of previous administrations.

"The jurisdiction of the Finance Minister concerns fiscal management. Previously, the mistake was that the Finance Minister centralised everything unto himself and could not do it. Now, in terms of his work allocation, a major part of economic planning and

medium-and long-term policies is determined by the Economy Ministry.

"Implementation is then jointly undertaken with ministries because the Finance Minister is responsible for ensuring that the procurement process is truly transparent.

"The best person to become the Finance Minister is the Prime Minister himself, as he will have the greatest responsibility to ensure proper governance of procurements and to avoid a repeat of incidents like fellow MPs over there (Opposition) who were involved in the Jana Wibawa issue," said Rafizi in reply to Muhyiddin (PN-Pagoh) during Question Time.

Muhyiddin had asked Rafizi whether he agreed that it is timely for the Prime Minister to appoint a full-time Finance Minister. He also asked whether prime ministers should not be holding the same position after

several economists and people raised concerns over the poor economic recovery in the country.

Rafizi's remarks sparked protests from the opposition MPs, with some shouting back at him to "change your party manifesto".

On Aug 15, the Kuala Lumpur High Court acquitted Muhyiddin of four charges of using his position for bribes amounting to RM232.5mil for Bersatu, related to the Jana Wibawa project, after allowing his application to drop all the charges.

Jana Wibawa refers to a programme to assist bumiputra contractors during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has come under MACC investigations for alleged misappropriations.

Previously, when Rafizi was in the opposition, he opposed Datuk Seri Najib Razak's position as finance minister in addition to being prime minister during the controversy surrounding

1Malaysia Development Bhd.

During Najib's tenure, he also filed a Private Member's Bill for a law that prohibits the prime minister from taking on the finance minister's portfolio.

Rafizi criticised Muhyiddin, a former prime minister, for accusing the government of not implementing strong economic measures and causing lack of confidence among the people as well as investors.

He defended the unity government's record in its economic measures, which has helped to reduce the level of poverty and inflation.

"Our economic recovery is happening in stages and there has been much improvement in investor confidence," Rafizi said.