

## **Mah Ready To Work Closely With Hindu Endowment Board For Betterment Of Hindu Community**

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PUTRAJAYA, July 7 (Bernama) -- Newly-appointed Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Mah Siew Keong, who has been tasked to oversee the Hindu Endowment Board, has called on the board's chairman P. Ramasamy to work closely with him for the betterment of Hindu community.

Mah, who is also Gerakan president, rubbished claims that his appointment, he being a non-Hindu, would make him less capable in handling the board.

"My job is to supervise (the Hindu Endowment Board) to ensure it runs smoothly. The by-laws say the minister will be tabling reports and accounts in Parliament. I do not have executive powers, I just supervise, nothing personal. So, I think is okay.

"However, the chairman of the board should be Hindu because he runs the day-to-day activities," he told a press conference at his office at Menara Usahawan here today.

"Give me a chance to discuss and work together and how best to help the Indian community since I have been tasked to overlook the portfolio... I appeal to Ramasamy to work together with me to enhance contribution to the Hindu Endowment Board and to help more people," he said.

Ramasamy, is also Penang Deputy Chief Minister II, had reportedly issued statements criticising Mah's appointment as an 'insult to Hindus" and questioned why an Indian was not appointed.

Mah, who won the Teluk Intan by-election on May 31, was appointed as Minister in the Prime Minister's Department last month.

The Hindu Endowment Board looks into matters of land, burial grounds and funds for the Hindu community.

TheAntDaily reported that MIC vice-president Datuk M Saravanan, who is also

Youth and Sports deputy minister said the board has never been MIC's responsibility but it was under the Welfare Department.

Meanwhile, Mah agreed with Malaysia Hindu Sangam's suggestion that the Hindu Endowment board should be headed by a non-politician to avoid religious matters being politicised.

"Let the Penang state government decide on this," he said after meeting Malaysian Hindu Sangam president Datuk R.S. Mohan Shan at his office where the discussions also touched on the possibility of setting up more endowment boards to assist the Hindu community.

Beside overseeing the Hindu Endowment Board, Mah also supervises the Malaysian Innovation Agency (AIM), Malaysian Industry Government Group for High Technology (Might), Malaysia Nuclear Power Corporation (MNPC) and welfare of Chinese petty traders and hawkers.

On a statement by Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin that Malaysia could see another bloody incident if no efforts to preserve inter-ethnic harmony were made, Mah said it was a reminder to all Malaysians to remain at peace and harmony under the 1Malaysia banner.

"Malaysians should stand up against extremist views. We should let the moderates be the heroes.

"Why is everyone focusing on racial issues? I think it is timely for everyone to stop politicking as there are many things to discuss including the transformation plans for the betterment of the people and nation so that we are on track to achieve Vision 2020 as a developed nation," he said.

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