

**Zahid: I proposed Hisham as minister of special functions**  
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**He says if he or the PM are busy, Hisham can represent the Malaysian government.**

PUTRAJAYA: The appointment of Hishammuddin Hussein as minister with special functions is not to take over the duty of another ministry, but to complement and strengthen the leadership in the government and party, says Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Zahid said he had proposed Hishammuddin as the minister of special functions.

“I made the proposal to the prime minister three months ago and at that time, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin was not present at the meeting.

“This was a sincere gesture from me personally and formally to Datuk Seri Hishammuddin because the three of us (including Prime Minister Najib Razak) had previously been the minister of defence and know that many other tasks need to be carried out.

“If a solution is needed to resolve several domestic or foreign issues, and there is a possibility that the prime minister or myself are busy, I will ask Hishammuddin to represent the Malaysian government.”

Zahid, who is also home minister, said the responsibility given to Hishammuddin was part of the government’s efforts to tackle various internal and international issues.

“He (Hishammuddin) can implement and assist the prime minister and me in discharging our duties.

“It does not mean taking over other ministries such as the foreign ministry. His duty is to enhance and complement the role of the prime minister and other ministers.

“Basically, Hishammuddin will assist the prime minister and me in putting serious efforts into translating the Malaysian government’s commitment towards addressing domestic and foreign issues, if there is any.”

Zahid spoke to reporters after a courtesy call by Hishammuddin, who is also defence minister, at his office at Perdana Putra here today.

Zahid said he and Hishammuddin had discussed several tasks, including the strengthening of the national leadership and party institutions.

He said other tasks would be discussed from time to time, including issues which were outside the scope of the defence ministry.

Dismissing the negative speculation made by several parties regarding him and Hishammuddin, due to the new appointment, Zahid said he would give his cooperation and support to Hishammuddin to discharge his new responsibility.

He was confident it would help the prime minister in strengthening the administration, he added.

Meanwhile, Hishammuddin said the courtesy call proved the close ties between him and Zahid, and that he was “very comfortable” working together under his new portfolio.

“This courtesy call is according to tradition and my respect for the deputy prime minister.

“This is important to show to the public the close relations we have developed all this while.

“This is not rhetoric or play acting. I sincerely and honestly state that my relationship with Zahid is most comfortable and I am looking forward to working with him under my new portfolio.”

Regarding his function to assist Najib in monitoring security in Sabah and the Eastern Sabah Security Command, Hishammuddin said he had a role to complement the existing tasks.

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