

Muhyiddin wanted finance minister post, but Guan Eng was a better pick, says Dr M

FREE MALAYSIA TODAY

February 17, 2021

FMT Reporters

PETALING JAYA: Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad claims that Muhyiddin Yassin had his eyes on the finance ministry portfolio after Pakatan Harapan took over Putrajaya in May 2018.

Mahathir said he decided to choose DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng as finance minister instead due to the latter's experience as former Penang chief minister, and his capabilities in clearing off the state's debts.

"Mat (Mohamad) Sabu was named defence minister, Muhyiddin was named home affairs minister and Wan Azizah (Wan Ismail) was deputy prime minister.

"We had to give him (Lim) a senior post (as a party leader). I also felt that he managed the Penang government well. We chose him because he was capable in that field although Muhyiddin wanted to be finance minister," he said at an online interview hosted by Sinar Harian today.

Commenting on the criticisms he received for appointing a Chinese as finance minister, Mahathir stressed that the post was awarded based on merit, and pointed out that Najib Razak was also finance minister during his time in government.

“He is Malay, look what he did,” he said, in reference to the many claims of embezzlement of public funds and corruption under the Barisan Nasional administration.

Mahathir also expressed regret for resigning as prime minister for the first time in 2003, saying at the time, he thought it was best to step down and give way to the younger generation.

“No one asked me to stop, I was still popular and still held a two-thirds majority support but I thought it was time for me to resign. I was already old, at over 70, but I did not expect the people who came in after me to do things that made the public uneasy.”

He added that he had hoped to rest after his resignation, but claimed that many people came to him a week later asking for help “to do something” about the government that followed.

While there were people who branded him as a dictator during his first stint as prime minister, Mahathir said many of his suggestions for the country were actually rejected by the Cabinet, especially during the financial crisis.

“They shouldn’t think that just because I was in the Cabinet, no one was speaking up. We would hold three-hour meetings, it’s not like I could be speaking the entire time, but people don’t believe this. They called me a dictator.”

Mahathir also said he believed his decades of experience in politics would still be useful in building the country, adding that he still wanted to contribute as a politician.

He added that it was important to continue fighting against corruption, claiming that many wanted to enter the world of politics just for power and money.

He said the fight must begin with the education of the young, and it was the government’s duty to ensure that children are taught the right moral values to adopt, right from kindergarten.

Copyright © 2009 - 2021 FMT Media Sdn Bhd. All Rights Reserved.

Sources:

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/02/17/muhyiddin-wanted-finance-minister-post-but-guan-eng-was-a-better-pick-says-dr-m/>