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Hassan-Reaction

ABU HASSAN'S CANDIDACY RECEIVES POSITIVE RESPONSE

KUALA LUMPUR, May 2 (Bernama) -- The announcement that Datuk Abu Hassan Omar would take over as the new Selangor Menteri Besar has been well received by political leaders at all levels.

They feel that Abu Hassan is capable of carrying out the responsibility well in view of his excellent record with the central government.

Umno Youth leader Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the movement was confident that Abu Hassan could use his vast experience to bring Selangor to greater heights.

"We hope he could spur greater development for Selangor just as what had been done by Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhammad Taib when he was at the helm," he said.

Wanita Umno leader Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman described the choice of Abu Hassan as the candidate for Menteri Besar by the Prime Minister was a "right choice."

"He has wide experience in administration and this is important to ensure that the rapid development in Selangor is maintained," she said.

Wanita Umno would work hard to assist Abu Hassan in the by-election for the Permatang state seat so that he could be officially appointed as Menteri Besar.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said it was a right choice as Abu Hassan had wide experience in federal and state administration.

"I offer my congratulations and I am sure that he will become a good Menteri Besar," said Sabbaruddin who is also Umno Secretary General.

Wanita Umno Information Head Datin Paduka Hajah Siti Fatimah Suhaimi said Abu Hassan's candidacy was rather unexpected.

"Selangor Wanita Umno will give full support to Datuk Abu Hassan and is confident that he is a leader of calibre who has rich experience to administer and develop Selangor," she said.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu in congratulating Abu Hassan said the former Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister is a capable leader who can take Selangor to greater heights.

"Abu Hassan brings with him the wealth of experience both as federal minister and a senior civil servant to the state administration.

"He has the welfare of the people at heart and sympathetic and understanding to the problems of the people," he said.

Samy Vellu, who is MIC president, said he is confident MIC will continue to have a close working relationship with the state government under his leadership.

"The MIC will extend its fullest cooperation to the new MB in administering the state and bringing greater progress and development to Selangor," he added.

Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang said Abu Hassan's selection is a "total surprise" which knocks out all speculation.

"Abu Hassan is eminently qualified to be Selangor Menteri Besar as he is respected and has the enormous task of cleansing the Augean stables.

"He fits the bill of expectation of the Sultan of Selangor and the Prime Minister of a candidate for the post of Menteri Besar who is 'really clean and honest'," he said in a statement.

According to Lim, who was quoting the Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, to cleanse the Augean stables means to clear away an accumulated mass of

corruption, moral, religious, physical or legal. To reform wrongs almost past the power of man to tackle.

Lim said Abu Hassan should start his administration not only with a new broom to sweep away all corrupt and improper practices, but also set a high standard of integrity and public accountability for the decisions and actions of state Exco.

In SEREMBAN, two Menteri Besar described Abu Hassan as the right candidate to hold the post of Selangor Menteri Besar.

Pahang Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalil Yaacob said Abu Hassan's selection should be accepted by all quarters especially party members.

"This is the decision of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as party president and chairman of Barisan Nasional (BN), which should be accepted positively," he said.

He disclosed this to reporters after the agreement signing ceremony for the sale of water as well as the memorandum of understanding on the border between Negeri Sembilan and Pahang, here.

At the ceremony, Negeri Sembilan was represented by Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad while Khalil represented Pahang.

Meanwhile, Mohamed Isa welcomed the announcement and believed that it (the selection) was made after the Prime Minister had studied all relevant aspects.

"I have confidence that Abu Hassan has the capability to administer Selangor well and bring the state to greater heights," he added.

In KANGAR, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim described Abu Hassan's candidacy as a right choice.

Shahidan said he knew Abu Hassan as a clean leader with vast experience in administration, politics and external relations.

In PULAU PINANG, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed echoed his agreement that Abu Hassan would make a good Menteri Besar as he is a senior politician in Selangor and has vast experience at the national level.

"I am confident that he can strengthen the Selangor administration and meets the high expectation of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to ensure Selangor's continued progress," he told reporters after closing the Quality Business Management Workshop organised by the Pulau Pinang Bumiputera Foundation and the Institute of Quality Management, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), here.

Asked whether the selection of Abu Hassan, a member of parliament, for the Menteri Besar's post would pose problem to the administration, he said it would not create any problem and believed the matter had been carefully studied from all angles before arriving at the decision.

"We need the best leader and this does not mean other leaders are not qualified. There are many qualified candidates but we want the best and the leadership made the decision after taking this into consideration," he added.

On his appointment as acting Minister for Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, he said he was not aware of it as he was out of Kuala Lumpur.

In MELAKA, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Abdul Ghani said Abu Hassan had the criteria of a leader needed to bring continued progress to Selangor.

In terms of hierarchy, Abu Hassan, as the deputy head of Selangor Umno, should take over duty when the state Umno head withdraws, he told reporters after a thanksgiving and presentation of subsidy by the Melaka RISDA Smallholders Cooperative at Bukit Palah, here.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, who welcomes the announcement, said Abu Hassan is well placed to hold the post.

She said it would not be a problem for Abu Hassan to get all the

Selangor state leaders together and continue to promote the well being and the interest of the state Government within the progress in Malaysia.

Questioned whether she was surprised on the appointment, Rafidah responded: "Abu Hassan is the Selangor Umno Liaison Committee Deputy Chairman and has been in politics for such a long time.

He described his candidacy as the successor to Muhammad as the new Menteri Besar as a very great honour.

"I accept the offer as a great responsibility which has to be shouldered as Selangor's development is crucial in view of the various major projects that were being implemented," he told Bernama when met at his residence today.

Abu Hassan, 56, deputy chairman of the Selangor Umno Liaison Body, resigned as cabinet minister and vacated his Kuala Selangor parliamentary seat.

He will stand in the by-election for the Permatang state seat soon. (He has to win the by-election as the post of MB must be held by a member of the state assembly).

Datuk Jamaluddin Adnan, who vacated the Permatang state seat, will stand for the Kuala Selangor parliamentary by-election. He once served as Abu Hassan's political secretary.

Abu Hassan said he had not expected to be selected as the candidate to become Selangor Menteri Besar and only came to know about it when Anwar informed him after having had an audience with the Sultan this morning.

The scene at Abu Hassan's residence was hectic this afternoon with friends and supporters arriving to offer congratulations.

Abu Hassan said Selangor's development was crucial as it was a leading state in the country in line with the rapid national development.

He said other mega projects that were being implemented in Selangor included Putrajaya, Cyberjaya and the West Port.

He said besides the support of Selangor leaders, the continued support and assistance of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and the central government was extremely important as the projects involved the federal government. -- BERNAMA

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