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Megat Junid made a Minister (HL)

Ashraf Abdullah; Ramlan Said; Tengku Sariffudin

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - After 11 years as Deputy Home Minister, Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob was today named Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister, succeeding Selangor Menteri Besar-designate Datuk Abu Hassan Omar.

Megat Junid, one of the longest serving Deputy Ministers, will be replaced by Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali.

Replacing Tajol Rosli will be Parliamentary Secretary in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Azmi Khalid who has been promoted.

The post left by Azmi will be vacant for now.

The minor reshuffle in the Government line-up was made by acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at a packed Press conference in the Prime Minister's Department.

Anwar said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is now on a two-month leave, agreed that he (Anwar) made the announcement.

This is the first time a change in the Cabinet was announced by a Deputy Prime Minister.

Megat Junid, Tajol Rosli and Azmi's appointments will be effective Saturday when they are sworn in before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar at Istana Negara.

Asked whether more changes to the Cabinet could be expected in the near future, Anwar said: "New appointments or changes (in the Government line-up) is the prerogative of the Prime Minister.

"There will be changes from time to time because of resignations or for other reasons. I don't think this is a matter for others to worry."

Abu Hassan resigned as MP for Kuala Selangor and Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister on May 2 in a direct swap of seats with Permatang State Assemblyman Datuk Jamaluddin Adnan to enable the former to be appointed Menteri Besar.

Megat Junid, 55, was instrumental in the various changes in the Home Ministry, most of which aimed at tackling the dadah problem and the entry of illegal immigrants which threatened national security.

He was appointed special assistant to Dr Mahathir in 1975 when the latter was Education Minister and was made political secretary when Dr Mahathir became Deputy Prime Minister a year later.

He remained as political secretary to Dr Mahathir when he became Prime Minister in 1981.

A Universiti Malaya graduate, Megat Junid was born in Teluk Intan, Perak, on Dec 8, 1942, to a rubber tapper and started working as a teacher.

But his interest in politics started even during his days in campus, he was actively involved in the Malay students' association. He joined Umno in 1972.

Megat Junid was elected MP for Hilir Perak in the 1982 general election and based on the guidelines provided by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Meanwhile, four urine test machines have been installed at the Malaysia-Thai border checkpoints of Padang Besar, Bukit Kayu Hitam, Rantau Panjang and Pengkalan Kubur to detect dadah addicts.

Megat Junid said the machines would be used to prevent addicts from entering the country as they could produce results about three minutes

after the tests were conducted.

"We have begun using the machines to carry out random tests on Malaysians using the Padang Besar, Bukit Kayu Hitam and Pengkalan Kubur checkpoints, while at Rantau Panjang, we have been carrying out tests on foreigners.

"If the urine tests conducted on foreigners turn out to be positive, the Immigration Department officers will deny them entry."

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