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Political leaders welcome appointment

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Political leaders today welcomed the announcement that Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar would take over as the new Selangor Menteri Besar.

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

Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said:

"I am pleased with his appointment, he is a very experienced politician with a long tenure in the Cabinet.

"His rapport with Federal leaders is very good. I am sure he can manage the State very well."

Najib said Abu Hassan's experience as a Cabinet Minister had exposed him to a better understanding of national policies and would enable him to lead and guide State policy in line with that of the Federal Government.

As for the vacancy in the Cabinet, following Abu Hassan's resignation as Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister, Najib said it was the prerogative of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to appoint his replacement.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said 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, also Umno Secretary General.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, in congratulating Abu Hassan, said: "Abu Hassan brings with him a 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 is sympathetic and understanding to their problems," he said.

Samy Vellu, who is MIC president, said he was confident MIC would continue to have a close working relationship with the State Government under his leadership.

Former Wanita Umno chief Datin Paduka Rafidah Aziz also lauded Abu Hassan's appointment as Menteri Besar designate and said she was not surprised as Abu Hassan had been in politics for a long time.

Rafidah, also International Trade and Industry Minister, said she was confident that Abu Hassan would have no problems carrying out his duties as Menteri Besar.

Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang said Abu Hassan's selection was a "total surprise".

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.

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 had been done by Tan Sri Muhammad 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 "right choice".

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

In Malacca, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Abdul Ghani said Abu

Hassan, being a leader with vast political and administrative background and experience, would be able to execute his duties well as the new Menteri Besar.

"He has held many posts, administratively and politically, and I am sure Selangor will continue to experience progress and stability under his leadership."

Mohd Zin also said the leadership's decision should be accepted by not only the people of Selangor but also the State Executive councillors and party members.

In Penang, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon congratulated Abu Hassan and expressed his confidence that he would be able to execute his duties as Menteri Besar efficiently.

"I have known Abu Hassan for 15 years since I became Member of Parliament and his experience as a minister will enable him to perform his duties well," he said when contacted.

In Seremban, Pahang Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalil Yaacob, in welcoming the appointment, said Abu Hassan was capable of administering Selangor without any problem in view of his vast experience in the Government.

Speaking after attending a water supply agreement signing ceremony between the Pahang and Negri Sembilan Governments today, Khalil said that Abu Hassan's appointment was appropriate as he was not only an Umno supreme council member but also the State party deputy chief.

Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Isa Abdul Samad said Dr Mahathir had considered all factors in the appointment.

To a question that the appointment would set a precedent as Abu Hassan had to vacate his Kuala Selangor Member of Parliament position, he said, it did not arise as anyone the Prime Minister felt qualified could be appointed to any post regardless of their position as State Assemblyman or MP.