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BN leaders: Line-up has good mix of experience and new talent

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Barisan Nasional component party leaders today described the new Cabinet line-up as a blend of experienced and new talent.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, who was retained as Transport Minister, said he was happy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had chosen a balanced team.

Dr Ling said as far as the MCA was concerned, Dr Mahathir had given the party's young leaders opportunities to gain experience in the Government.

These leaders, he said, would work closely with guilds and associations as well as other BN parties to fulfil their election promises.

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, re-appointed as Primary Industries Minister, said the Cabinet had highly qualified members that would lead the country into the new millennium.

"The Prime Minister also made a wise decision by retaining some members like Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paduka Dr Abdul Hamid Othman. We need such experienced people to lead the country," he said.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the new appointments would further strengthen the Government machinery and bring the necessary changes in order to bring further development to benefit the people.

He said the changes were necessary in line with the development taking place in the country.

As for his re-appointment as Works Minister, Samy Vellu thanked Dr Mahathir for the confidence placed in him.

"I consider this as a key role in the nation's infrastructure development and I pledge to do my best in fulfilling my responsibilities," he told reporters at the Works Ministry today.

As for the appointment of MIC candidates, Samy Vellu said his request for an MIC Deputy Minister to be upgraded to a Minister was not considered because Dr Mahathir had said he was not expanding the Cabinet.

In Johor Baru, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman thanked Dr Mahathir for appointing young leaders from the State to the Cabinet.

Ghani said this was a recognition of their ability to contribute at national level.

"This is a chance for the young blood to serve the country. On behalf of the Johor BN, I thank the Prime Minister for the golden opportunity given to them," he said.

The "young" ones Ghani was referring to include Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein (Youth and Sports Minister), Khaled Nordin (Deputy Works Minister), Abdul Latiff Ahmad (Deputy Human Resources Minister), Dr Robia Datuk Kosai (Land and Co-operative Development Ministry parliamentary secretary) and Hashim Ismail (Finance Ministry parliamentary secretary).

With their appointments, Ghani said there were 11 Members of Parliament, out of 20 from Johor, now attached to various ministries.

In Penang, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon congratulated Dr Mahathir for appointing a good mix of "experienced old faces" and "new and gifted" leaders.

This combination, he said, reflected a "mature, accomplished and proficient" team capable of assisting Dr Mahathir and his deputy in nation-building and leading Malaysians into the 21st century.

"It is a team of 'kawan-kawan lama' (old friends)," he told a Press

conference at his office in Komtar.

Conceding that the appointment of Tan Sri Musa Mohamad as Education Minister was "unexpected", Koh said:

"It is a wise choice as Musa's experience as former vice-chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia will be a definite plus in dealing with educational matters."

Koh also expressed his pleasure that four Penang politicians - Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Koh's former Deputy Datuk Seri Mohd Shariff Omar, Bukit Bendera MP Chia Kwang Chye and Bayan Baru MP Wong Kam Hoong - are included in the new line-up.

Meanwhile, Datuk Law Hieng Ding who has been retained as Science, Technology and Environment Minister said he would continue to do his best in discharging his duties.

He would now be able to continue with the programmes and activities planned for the protection of the environment and the development of science and technology.

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