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Mahathir-Cabinet

MAHATHIR TO ANNOUNCE NEW CABINET TOMORROW

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 9 (Bernama) -- The formation of the new Cabinet following Malaysia's 10th general election last Nov 29 will be announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir, as chairman of the Barisan Nasional coalition, which won the general election by two-thirds majority, will call on the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah at 10 am to present the proposed Cabinet line-up for his majesty's consent.

According to a statement from the Office of the Prime Minister today, Dr Mahathir will hold a media conference at the Prime Minister's Department in Putrajaya at 4 pm to announce his new Cabinet and other members of the administration.

A ceremony for the presentation of appointment letters and for the oaths of office, loyalty and secrecy by cabinet members and deputy ministers before the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong will be held at Istana Negara here on Tuesday, Dec 14.

The last Cabinet had 28 members, including the Prime Minister, while the other members of the administration were 31 deputy ministers and 12 parliamentary secretaries.

Four ministers lost in last month's general election, another contested in a State Legislative Assembly seat while two others did not stand at all.

The defeated ministers were Datuk Mustapa Mohamed (Second Finance Minister and Entrepreneur Development Minister), Datuk Annuar Musa (Rural Development), Datuk Paduka Dr Abdul Hamid Othman (Prime Minister's Department) and Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob (Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs).

Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali (Prime Minister's Department) contested and won the Kenering state seat in Perak and has been appointed Menteri Besar of that state.

Former cabinet members who did not seek re-election were Datuk Lim Ah Lek (Human Resources) and Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha (Defence).

Several deputy ministers and parliamentary secretaries also lost or did not contest in the Nov 29 general election.

Leaders of BN component parties who retained their parliamentary seats are expected to be reappointed to the new Cabinet.

They include Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik (MCA), Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu (MIC), Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik (Gerakan) and Datuk Amar Leo Moggie (Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak).

To fill up vacancies, several deputy ministers are expected to be promoted to full ministers and similarly, parliamentary secretaries to deputy ministers.

One of those on the probable promotion list is Deputy Primary Industries Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, who is also the acting Umno Youth chief and the Member of Parliament for Tenggara.

There was also speculation about two former leaders of the now-defunct Semangat 46 who had since rejoined Umno, namely Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Datuk Dr Rais Yatim, being appointed to the Cabinet. Both were former ministers.

The last Cabinet had three women ministers -- Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz (International Trade and Industry), Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman (Prime Minister's Department) and Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail (National Unity and Social Development). All three have been re-elected to Parliament.

In terms of distribution of ministerial posts among the states, the BN would, for the first time, be without ministers from Terengganu since the coalition has no MP at all from that state.

All the BN's eight parliamentary candidates in Terengganu lost to their PAS challengers in the recent general election.

However, Cabinet members can still be appointed from among Senators in the upper house of Parliament, the Dewan Negara.

-- BERNAMA

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