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New Pahang MB inherits a tradition of collective responsibility

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IT can be likened to a relay. The first runner builds up a comfortable lead and the baton changing that follows is perfect.

During the initial strides, the second runner may take time to pick up speed. Egged on by the crowd, he will soon find his rhythm, quicken his strides as he widens the lead.

This is the scenario in Pahang. Outgoing Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob has stamped his mark during his 13-year tenure at the helm of the State Government.

With this, he has built a strong foundation for his successor Datuk Adnan Yaakob to carry on with the same enthusiasm and momentum.

Khalil himself has no doubt about Adnan's capability, both in leading the State Government and charting the State's growth.

"Anyone picked by the leadership and who has adequate experience in administering the State and party, fulfills the basic criteria for becoming a Menteri Besar.

"Once at the helm, he will undergo the normal process of accumulating experience and knowledge. Naturally, it will enhance his ability to lead. I went through the same process when I was appointed to the post 13 years ago," he said.

As Adnan has served as an executive councillor for the last nine years, Khalil said he is familiar with the intricacies that come with the post of Menteri Besar.

"We in the State practise the concept of collective responsibility and the team spirit is very much prevailing," Khalil said.

As a senior Exco member, Adnan sits on the State Development Council and State Land Committee and this provides him with a clear picture on how future development of the State should be carried out.

His first important task after the swearing-in ceremony on Tuesday is to decide on the line-up of the State Executive Council. The post of executive councillors have automatically fallen vacant following Khalil's appointment as Information Minister.

Adnan, who is Bentong Umno chief, made it clear that he would give equal attention to every part of the State.

"All of us are from Pahang ... there is no such thing as east or west Pahang," he said in response to a remark that he would be the first Menteri Besar from the west side of the State.

His experience as State Housing Committee chairman between 1990 and 1995 and Religious Affairs and Education Committee chairman since 1995 will come in handy in discharging his duties as Menteri Besar.

Several issues are awaiting Adnan whose capability will be put to test.

It will be interesting to see how he deals with issues arising out of the proposed Sungai Telemong dam development which is part of the RM2 billion Pahang-Klang Valley water transfer project as the area comes under his Pelangai State seat.

Talk has been rife that several populated areas there will be inundated by the dam.

Also, the RM3.6 billion East-Coast Highway project linking Karak in Bentong and Kuantan is still pending although the Pahang Government has repeatedly stressed that the project will be the catalyst for further development of the State.

Another issue in Bentong is the illegal opening of government land by

vegetable growers, especially ginger farmers, in Bukit Tinggi.

Indiscriminate opening of land has led to a number of landslides in the highlands.

Adnan needs all the support and backing of his colleagues in the State Government in order to solve these issues. That he can count on, as all the existing executive councillors have expressed their support and readiness to work hand-in-hand with the new Menteri Besar.

Deputy Menteri Besar Datuk Hasan Arifin has expressed his willingness to serve Adnan although he is the number two under Khalil's administration.

"Adnan should be given the chance to lead the State. As party members, we have to abide by the directive of the party chief (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad)," Hasan said.

Other exco members from Umno comprising Datuk Omar Othman, Datuk Tan Aminuddin Ishak, Datuk Bahari Yahya, Datuk Wan Razali Wan Mahussin and Datuk Shahiruddin Abdul Moin have also pledged to give their co-operation to the new Menteri Besar.

Adnan can rest assured that he will not be alone if he continues to promote the concept of collective responsibility and team spirit in his administration.

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