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Rais-Repent

RAIS REPENTS, VALUES DR MAHATHIR'S TRUST IN HIM

SEREMBAN, Dec 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Dr Rais Yatim says he is surprised by his appointment as a Cabinet minister, after a 12-year lapse.

His last Cabinet post was as Foreign Minister before he quit in 1987.

"I repent, I appreciated very much the confidence placed on me to be in Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's cabinet.

"Personally, the appointment is an overall rehabilitation to me," he told BERNAMA when contacted at his house in Kuala Lumpur today.

Dr Mahathir today named Rais as the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department. He won in the Jelebu parliamentary seat in the Nov 29 general election.

Rais said: "The last time I was in the Cabinet was in 1987. With the lapse of nearly 12 years, it's unthinkable of me returning to the Cabinet.

" I did not expect this appointment. With my political background of leaving Umno about 10 years ago and resigning as Foreign Minister in 1987, it would not have been easy for Dr Mahathir to appoint me," he said.

" And now, I've to work directly under Dr Mahathir in the Prime Minister's Department," said the 57-year-old constitutional expert.

Rais served as Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar from 1978-1982 before being appointed Land and Regional Development Minister (1982-85), Information Minister (1985-86) and Foreign Minister (1986-87) before leaving Umno to join Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46).

He rejoined Umno after the dissolution of S46.

Rais assured Dr Mahathir he would discharge his duties to the best of his ability.

"I'm determined to work hard to make Barisan Nasional (BN) a strong government to continue its development agenda and ensure the people's prosperity.

"All these while, I did not harbour any hopes of returning to the cabinet although I was actively helping out in implementing party programmes," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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