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## Government leaders hail latest changes in Cabinet

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Government leaders today welcomed the new appointments in the Government administration, describing it as apt and timely.

Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob congratulated Senator Datuk Zainuddin Maidin on his appointment as Deputy Information Minister. (see CORRECTION above)

"His appointment is apt, considering his vast experience in the media," said Khalil.

Meanwhile, Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib said Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's and Brig Jen (Rtd) Datuk Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin's appointments, said they represented "a good move".

Shahrizat was named as Women's Affairs Minister, while Abdul Hamid was appointed Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Bernama reports that Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz is happy with Shahrizat's appointment as it showed that womens' struggle was given special attention.

"I thank the Prime Minister for recognising women's importance," she said while expressing the hope that more women would be appointed to the Cabinet.

Rafidah expressed her confidence that Shahrizat would be able to lead the ministry well with the experience gained through her interaction with non-governmental organisations.

Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin described the promotion of Shahrizat to full minister a good move as it reflected the Government's recognition of the role played by women in the country's affairs.

He said with Shahrizat's promotion to the post of Women's Affairs Minister, there would now be three women Cabinet ministers.

The others are Rafidah, the International Trade and Industry Minister, and National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman.

"The women (in the country) should be happy," he said when commenting on the latest shifting of Cabinet portfolios by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Daim also said many women had been appointed to senior positions in the government.

They include Bank Negara Governor Datuk Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz, Attorney-General Datuk Ainum Mohd Saaid, Solicitor-General Datuk Helilah Mohamed Yusof, National Archives Director-General Datuk Habibah Zon and National Library Director-General Shahar Banun Jaafar.

In Penang, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said the creation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs was "timely".

"The decision reflects our society's increased awareness of the plights and discrimination faced by women in the workplace and at home.

"Women's welfare must be accorded prominence by the public and decision-makers.

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