

Abdullah congratulates trio on their appointments

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KUALA LUMPUR: Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi expressed confidence in the new Cabinet appointments.

He said he had no doubt that they would be able to carry out their duties and responsibilities entrusted upon them.

He congratulated Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis, Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor and Datuk Zainuddin Maidin on their appointments and for being given the trust by the Prime Minister to hold higher positions.

Dr Jamaludin was appointed Second Finance Minister, Tengku Adnan Minister in the Prime Minister's Department and Zainuddin Deputy Information Minister.

Abdullah was speaking to reporters after chairing the Umno management committee meeting here yesterday.

Tengku Adnan said he would adopt a more people-friendly attitude like other Umno frontline leaders.

Describing his appointment as a "surprise", he thanked the Prime Minister for having confidence in him and pledged to discharge his duties with full responsibility.

Speaking to reporters at Parliament House, Tengku Adnan, 51, said he believed Dr Mahathir decided on his promotion after taking into account his performance as Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Tengku Adnan, who is Um-

no executive secretary and Federal Territory Umno chief, was a businessman before entering politics in 1984.

Senator Datuk Zainuddin Maidin, 63, described his appointment as an honour and recognition for journalists.

The former editor-in-chief of *Utusan Malaysia* has over 30 years' experience in the field of journalism and was appointed Information Ministry parliamentary secretary in January 2001.

In Pahang, state Umno liaison chief Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob welcomed the appointment of Dr Jamaludin.

"We are not being parochial in this matter. It is only natural to be happy when we see someone from Pahang given the trust to hold the post," he said after the state exco meeting yesterday.

MCA vice-president Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said the party was confident that the two newly-appointed ministers would play their roles effectively and ensure that the Government's objectives were met.

He believed that Dr Jamaludin and Tengku Adnan would introduce new ideas in the implementation of Government policies.

Political observers note that Dr Jamaludin's appointment would make Pahang one of the "strongest" states with four full Umno ministers in the Cabinet now.

The others are Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun

Razak, Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman.

Umno supreme council member Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad said Dr Mahathir had made a wise decision in appointing Dr Jamaludin to a key post in the Cabinet.

"This will definitely strengthen Pahang against whatever onslaught by the opposition in the next election," he said in an interview yesterday.

Pahang Barisan lost six seats to PAS, one to Parti Keadilan Nasional and one to DAP in the last election.

Keadilan's Pahang chief, Jafri Abdul Rashid, admitted that Dr Jamaludin's appointment would be a threat to the opposition's plan in the next election.

"He is now elevated to a very important portfolio and would have access to new resources to counter the opposition," he added.

Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohd Tajol Rosli Ghazali Tajol said he was confident Dr Jamaludin could help Dr Mahathir with the day-to-day running of the ministry.

In Kota Kinabalu, Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat said that the new Cabinet appointments would ensure a better running of the Government.

He described the three new appointees as "very capable and trusted by the Prime Minister."