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Muhyiddin-Profile

MUHYIDDIN TO BRING AGRO SECTOR TO THE FORE

By: Harlina Samson

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 7 (Bernama) -- The appointment of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin as Agriculture Minister is seen as a significant move to propel the agricultural sector to greater heights.

As pointed out by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi when commenting on his transfer to the Agriculture Ministry, Muhyiddin is believed to have what it takes to transform the agricultural sector to play a bigger role in mainstream development.

Fondly known as "anak Mat Yassin, Muhyiddin once emerged as the "giant killer" defeating former Johor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Othman Saat to helm Pagoh Umno division in the 1985 party election.

The rising star in the Umno political arena never looked back since then.

Although on several occasions, he acknowledged that he was a reluctant politician, the 53-year-old Johorean had carved a niche as a farsighted and pragmatic leader.

After graduating with an economics degree from Universiti Malaya in 1969, Muhyiddin joined the Johor Civil Service and served as the Muar assistant district officer from 1971 to 1974.

The Muar-born Muhyiddin left the civil service in 1974 to take up a post as a Personnel Manager in a electronics company.

He joined the Johor State Economic Development Corporation to head Sergam Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the corporation, and resigned in 1977.

Muhyiddin, who entered politics in 1970, was Muar-Pagoh Umno division treasurer. He was vice-head of the division in 1975.

He also headed the Pagoh Umno Youth wing and was elected Johor Umno Youth secretary in 1976 prior to his elevation as Johor Umno Youth deputy

head in 1977.

He contested and won the Pagoh parliamentary seat in the 1978 general election and was appointed Foreign Ministry Parliamentary Secretary in Dr Mahathir's cabinet on July 18, 1981.

He retained the seat in the 1982 general election and was promoted as Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry in the Cabinet reshuffle announced by Dr Mahathir on June 2, 1983.

Muhyiddin's political acumen and leadership were perhaps best manifested in the Umno Supreme Council election in 1986 when he garnered the second highest votes.

He then served as Johor Menteri Besar from 1986 to 1995. As Menteri Besar, his record was impressive. He brought Johor to the forefront of the country's mainstream development.

Muhyiddin was Youth and Sports Minister from 1995 to 1999 and later became Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister, a post he held until today's appointment.

His political career, however, was not without ups and downs. He lost in his first attempt for the vice-presidency in 1990.

In 1993, he secured the post with the highest votes but failed to defend it in the 1996 party election, finishing sixth out of seven candidates.

Muhyiddin regained the post in the 2000 party election.

He is married to Puan Sri Norainee Abdul Rahman and has two sons and two daughters.

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