

07 JAN 2004

Najib-DPM

NAJIB TO BE ANNOUNCED DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 7 (Bernama) -- Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is expected to be appointed as the Deputy Prime Minister tomorrow, according to a government source here tonight.

The source said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is expected to announce the appointment after the cabinet meeting tomorrow.

The announcement will end months of speculation after Abdullah became Prime Minister following the retirement of his predecessor Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 31, 2003.

Najib, 50, is one of the three Umno vice-presidents besides Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and a former Selangor Menteri Besar, Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, who had been widely speculated to be picked as the Deputy Prime Minister.

Najib, who is also Pekan Umno Division Head, entered Parliament at the age of 22 in 1976 upon the death of his father, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, who was Malaysia's second Prime Minister.

He became the country's youngest Deputy Minister in 1978 when he was made Deputy Minister of Energy, Telecommunications and Post.

He was made Pahang Menteri Besar in 1982 before entering the Cabinet as Culture, Youth and Sports Minister in 1986.

Among the cabinet posts held by Najib were as the Education Minister from 1995 to 1999 and the defence portfolio twice.

In Umno, he had been a member of the Umno Youth Executive Committee, Chairman of Pahang Umno Youth and a member of Umno Supreme Council before becoming acting head of Umno Youth in 1987.

In 1993, he was elected an Umno vice-president when he obtained 1,202 votes.

He was also made a member of the Umno Disciplinary and Management Committee chaired by the Umno deputy president.

Najib first stood for election in 1976 during the by-election for the Pekan parliamentary constituency following the death of his father and was returned unopposed.

An economics graduate of the University of Nottingham, England, Najib is married to Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and has five children.

-- BERNAMA

HM AO