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Right man for the job, say political leaders

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Political leaders today welcomed the appointment of Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak as Deputy Prime Minister, saying that his vast experience in politics and Government made him the right man for the job.

They also welcomed the new Cabinet appointments of Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Datuk Dr Effendi Norwawi, Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis and Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop.

MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said the party looked forward to co-operating closely with the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Najib in achieving the goals of the party as well as the aspirations of the Chinese community and the nation.

"Together we will realise our vision of becoming a fully developed country and a truly united people," he said.

Ong, who is Housing and Local Government Minister, said with Najib's vast experience in politics and Government, the MCA was confident that he would be able to assist Abdullah in strengthening the country's position as a model of a harmonious and progressive multi-racial nation.

"The MCA, as a member of Barisan Nasional, has worked well with Najib over the years, from the days when he was first made a deputy minister through to his rise to a full minister and Umno Youth chief and, since 1993, an Umno vice-president."

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said Najib's appointment showed that Abdullah had trust in him (Najib).

"The appointment is timely," he said, adding that Najib, who has vast experience in the political arena and in nation administration, has the calibre and leadership quality to be the Deputy Prime Minister.

Samy Vellu also said the little "juggling" in the Cabinet was for the good of the Government.

"We knew about Najib being appointed the DPM. But the other changes caught us by surprise."

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said Najib's appointment would further strengthen Umno's position as the main party in the BN, considering Najib had strong grassroots support.

Having been the youngest MP and having served in various capacities, Dr Lim said he was confident Najib had enough experience to carry out his new responsibilities.

Dr Lim also welcomed the new Cabinet line-up and said that it was in line with Abdullah's policy to give more priority to agriculture and rural development.

MCA deputy president Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy described Najib as a mature and experienced politician, saying that he was the most suitable person to be appointed Abdullah's deputy.

"I congratulate Najib. He is from my State and is a very experienced national leader.

"I think he is the right man for the job. We are confident the Prime Minister and him will steer the nation to greater heights," said Chan, who is also Transport Minister.

Meanwhile, former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Ghafar Baba said Najib had the right qualities to be a good leader, having had a father who was a Prime Minister.

"He has the grounding and making him Abdullah's deputy is a right move," he said in Malacca.

Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib said Najib's appointment would ensure BN perform well in the next general election.

With Najib's vast experience, Muhammad said the Deputy Prime Minister was an asset to the Government, especially in countering Pas.

"Now, we are more ready than ever to go into the general election. We will go in as a strong team," said the former Selangor Menteri Besar.

Umno information chief Tan Sri Megat Junid Megat Ayub said Najib was a right candidate considering he (Najib) garnered the highest vote in the vice-presidential race during the 2000 Umno elections.

"This shows Abdullah respects the wishes of the delegates and I support his decision," he added.

People's Progressive Party president Datuk M. Kayveas said the party agreed with Abdullah's choice.

"The Prime Minister's choice is also the PPP's choice."

Gerakan secretary-general Chia Kwang Chye said the appointment of Najib was a good start for the new year.

Chia, who is also Bukit Bendera MP, said the party would render full support to Najib and believed his appointment would help maintain the country's stability and prosperity.

Liberal Democratic Party president Datuk Chong Kah Kiat described Najib as a "steady" leader who would not react according to impulse.

"He is calm and mature. His experience in politics and Government will help the Prime Minister bring more progress for the country," he said.

Parti Bersatu Sabah president Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan said by filling the vacancy for the post of Deputy Prime Minister, Abdullah would be able to do a better job for the people and country.

"Najib is an effective leader and we are happy with his appointment. We'll give our full support to him," Pairin said.

Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah president Tan Sri Joseph Kurup said Najib's long political career would enable him to address national and global issues.

Sabah Progressive Party president Datuk Yong Teck Lee said Najib would be an asset to Abdullah as he had extensive experience, both in the country and internationally.

"His appointment will also strengthen the BN because of his open and progressive leadership style," he said.

Terengganu Menteri Besar and Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang hopes Najib will carry out his duties well.

He said Najib's appointment would not make BN stronger, adding that Pas was not intimidated by his influence on the people.

Abdul Hadi also said the Cabinet reshuffle would not affect Pas in anyway, but hoped the changes would do more good than bad to the people.

DAP secretary general Kerk Kim Hock said the appointment was expected as Najib's name had been speculated since the retirement of former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 31.

He also expressed hope that Najib and Abdullah would bring the country to greater heights and said the DAP would work with them to achieve common goals.

Parti Keadilan Nasional president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said Najib's appointment did not come as a surprise to many.

"His appointment had been voiced out by the former PM, thus I can safely say that the presence of Dr Mahathir is still very much alive in Barisan Nasional.

"With Najib's appointment, I foresee that the general election will be held sooner than expected," she added.

Parti Rakyat Malaysia president Dr Syed Husin Ali said PRM would adopt a wait-and-see attitude as Najib carries out his new duties as Deputy PM.

