

'Budget shows KJ's power, may become DPM'

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A veteran newsman has outlined the possibility of Khairy Jamaluddin rising up the ranks swiftly to become deputy prime minister.

Referring to the rise in allocation in the 2015 budget for the Youth and Sports Ministry, A Kadir Jasin said this reflected the Umno Youth chief's growing influence and power.

It was reported that Khairy's ministry received a whopping RM1 billion compared to RM700 million in the previous budget.

Kadir said should Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak be forced to retire before the next general election, his deputy Muhyiddin Yassin and current home minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi would take over the top two posts.

However, he added if Muhyiddin is tired and decides to quit before this happens, then current Umno vice-president and defence minister Hishammuddin Hussein would replace Najib.

"If this is the situation, Khairy has the potential to become the next deputy prime minister," he wrote in his blog today.

Grand ambitions

It is an open secret that the Oxford-trained politician has grand ambitions.

Many had expected him to fizzle out after his father-in-law Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was arm twisted into vacating the prime minister's post following BN's major setback in the 2008 general election.

But Khairy defied the odds and much to the chagrin of former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is said to despise him, defeated the latter's son Mukhriz and ex-Selangor menteri besar Mohd Khir Toyo in the contest for the Umno Youth post and managed to retain the position last year.

His inclusion into the cabinet after the last national polls, noted Kadir, gave the 38-year-old politician an edge over his contemporaries.

"The combination of being Umno Youth chief and minister has given him many advantages and powers compared to other Umno and government leaders who rose at the same time.

"Whether Najib realises it or not, Khairy is now at the forefront of inheriting Umno. After

the president, deputy president and three vice-presidents, there is Khairy," he pointed out.

Kadir, who is the former New Straits Times group editor-in-chief and close associate of Mahathir, said while he expected Khairy to be appointed as a minister, he did not anticipate him overseeing the youth and sports portfolio.

He pointed out that some former Umno Youth leaders like Syed Jaafar Albar and Suhaimi Kamaruddin had rejected cabinet posts as they chose to be critical of the government.

Political survivor

The veteran newsman also regurgitated the rumour that Khairy wanted to become prime minister by the time he is 40.

He said whether it was coincidental or planned, the son of a former diplomat was successful in becoming close to Abdullah, serving as his special aide, and marrying his daughter.

When Anwar Ibrahim was sacked as deputy prime minister in 1998, he added that lady luck smiled on Abdullah and this was to Khairy's benefit.

"Following Abdullah's fall, logically it was expected that Khairy would also suffer the same fate as he was a part of Abdullah's much despised kitchen cabinet then," he said, referring to what critics called the "fourth floor boys".

However, Kadir said Khairy managed to free himself from Abdullah's stigma and grew close to Najib, exhibiting his trait as a "political survivor".

In view of this, he said whether his detractors like it or not, Khairy cannot be discounted with regard to the current political landscape.

"We must place Khairy in an important post in the political and leadership scenario of this decade.

"Khairy will remain as a fast rising star unless there emerges some other charismatic, smart and good orator in the future," he added.