

PM's message to ministers

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There was no back-slapping or celebratory hugs during the Cabinet meeting today. Only a clear message from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi that the Ninth Malaysia Plan was a priority and that he wanted everyone to be on the same page with him.

There was no strong language but the message was unmistakable: No seat-warmers, please. Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said Abdullah was very concerned about the 9MP.

"The Prime Minister said he had chosen us to help him see the plan through, which is very important to him as it is his first."

Newly-appointed Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid said the Prime Minister spoke at length about the plan, stressing that all projects had to be carried out successfully if Malaysia was to achieve developed nation status by 2020.

"He wants all projects to be carried out without delay," said Azmi.

The Prime Minister also expressed his gratitude to those who had resigned or were dropped from the Cabinet yesterday. None of them or their replacements attended the meeting today. The new ministers will take their oaths before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong at Istana Negara in Kuala Lumpur on Friday.

Datuk Khaled Nordin, Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development Minister, said Abdullah wanted all ministers to translate the 9MP into action.

"He told ministers who switched portfolios not to take too long to understand their new jobs. He wants us to start moving." Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said Abdullah told them to "put their hands to the wheel" and work harder to ensure the success of the 9MP.

"He also reminded us that we must always appreciate the needs of the people because we will be judged by them," Fong said.

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