

THE STAR

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PM drops 'big guns'

Rafidah, Adnan and Jamaluddin out of Cabinet; Muhammad in

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi unveiled his Cabinet comprising new faces and a number of surprises.

He said this new smaller Cabinet reflected the Barisan Nasional spirit of power-sharing and consensus.

Among the surprises were the appointment of vocal lawyer Datuk Zaid Ibrahim, who was previously Kota Baru MP but was not fielded in the recent general election, and former Maybank chief executive officer Datuk Amirsham Aziz as ministers.

The two, together with Datuk Dr Mashitah Ibrahim who was made a deputy minister, were sworn in as Senators yesterday.

Other surprises were the inclusion of former Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib and Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad who was Federal Territory Minister in the 1980s.

Several heavyweights were also dropped.

Among them were former International Trade and Industry Minister

Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, former Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor and former Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis.

Announcing the line-up at a press conference here, a jovial Abdullah said he had trimmed the size of the administration from 90 members to 68 ministers and deputy ministers.

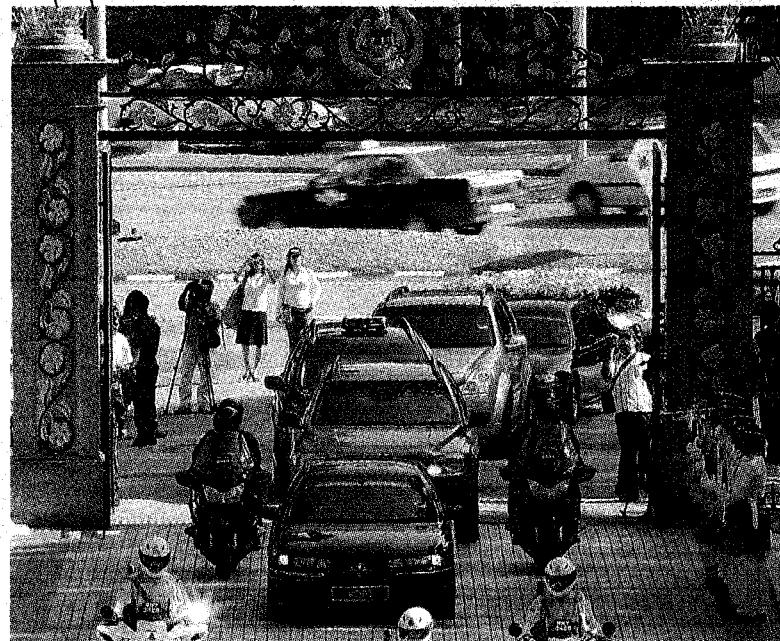
He also did not appoint any parliamentary secretaries.

"This means the ministers and deputies have to be more active in the Parliament," he said.

Abdullah also merged the Home Affairs and Internal Security Ministries which were created in 2004, saying their functions overlapped.

The National Integration Department, which was previously under the Prime Minister's Department, has now been absorbed into the new Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage Ministry.

On why he dropped Dr Jamaluddin and Rafidah, Abdullah said it was



Palace visit: The Prime Minister's convoy entering Istana Negara to get the King's consent to form the new Cabinet yesterday. — Bernama

his prerogative.

"I do not need to discuss it. I believe she should also make way for new people."

On his new appointments, Abdullah said Zaid would be respon-

sible for legal matters and take on the role to change and reform the judiciary.

Amirsham would meanwhile oversee the Economic Planning Unit.