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PM: Wan Zulkiflee is Petronas' next CEO

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3-YEAR TERM: Staff welcome appointment

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THE government yesterday named Datuk Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin as Petronas' new chief executive officer and president, effective April 1.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said Wan Zulkiflee, currently Petronas' chief operating officer and head of its downstream business, would assume the top post for a three-year term.

He will succeed Tan Sri Shamsul-Azhar Abbas, whose contract expired yesterday but will serve through March 31 to facilitate a smooth transition.

Petronas is Malaysia's only Fortune 500 company.

Najib paid tribute to Shamsul for his contributions since he assumed the top post in 2010.

"He has served the oil and gas company since 1975 and has held senior management positions.

"With his wide knowledge and experience, I hope Shamsul will continue to contribute to the nation, especially in the energy sec-

tor, which is a very important sector in the country's development."

Najib said Wan Zulkiflee, 54, had vast experience in the country's petroleum industry.

"He is Petronas' chief operating officer and executive vice-president of its downstream business. Besides that, Wan Zulkiflee is also chairman of Petronas Chemicals Group Bhd and Petronas Dagangan Bhd.

"He has the qualifications and experience to take Petronas to greater heights."

Both Shamsul and Wan Zulkiflee received a standing ovation from some 3,000 Petronas staff at a townhall session yesterday afternoon to announce the appointment.

Analysts said the gesture was seen as a thumbs up to the prime minister's decision regarding the leadership changes at Petronas. They viewed Wan Zulkiflee, "born and bred" in Petronas, as a natural choice to succeed Shamsul.

The Penang-born Wan Zulkiflee joined Petronas in 1983 as a process engineer and was involved in the

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