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Muhyiddin **axed**, Ahmad Zahid is DPM

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> Palanivel, Shafie Apdal, Hassan Malek and Ewon Ebin dropped in new Cabinet line-up

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PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak yesterday unveiled a new Cabinet, ending strong speculation and rumours over the last few days.

Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi replaces Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin as the new deputy prime minister, which according to Najib, was done due to political and administrative needs.

"The decision to replace Tan Sri Muhyiddin was very difficult, but one I had to make to ensure the Cabinet moves as one unified team.

"Nevertheless, I thank Tan Sri Muhyiddin for all his dedicated service, as I do all those ministers and deputy ministers who are no longer in the Cabinet," he said.

Ahmad Zahid retains his portfolio of home minister while Najib also keeps his finance minister post

Najib said the King had given his consent on the new Cabinet in line with the Federal Constitution.

He said the new line-up will continue to focus on the country's development efforts as promised by Barisan Nasional in the last general election.

The ones dropped from the new line-up are former MIC president Datuk Seri G. Palanivel (natural resources and environment), Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal (rural and regional development), Datuk Seri Hassan Malek (domestic trade, cooperatives and consumerism) and Datuk Dr Ewon Ebin (science, technology and innovation).

"I can accept differences of opinion and criticism. However, members of the Cabinet should not air their differences in an open forum that can affect public opinion of the government aird Malaysia. It is contrary to the concept of collective responsibility that is the foundation of the Cabinet," he said.

The newly appointed ministers include Datuk Wilfred Madius Tangau (science, technology and innovation), Datuk Hamzah Zainudin (domestic trade, cooperatives, and consumerism), Datuk Seri Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (natural

resources and environment), Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid (education), Senator Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Salleh Said Keruak (communication and multimedia), Datuk Azalina Othman Said (Prime Minister's Department) and Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan (international trade and industry **H**).

The Education Ministry is split into two ministries with the education portfolio going to Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid and Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh is given the higher education minister post.

Public Accounts Committee chairman Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed is now the deputy home minister.

"BN was founded on the principles of unity. That is the hallmark of this nation - and the recipe for our future success.

"Insha'Allah, I believe the new Cabinet will drive forward the government's ability to deliver on our promises to the people during the last GE. Nothing is more important than the needs of Malaysia and the people - I will always put their interests above all others.

"I am confident that in time, this new Cabinet will increase public confidence in the government and BN ahead of GE14," said Najib.