

5 NEW MINISTERS IN CABINET RESHUFFLE

5 deputy ministers, 4- fresh faces while 5 former ministers make comeback in new cabinet line-up

KUALA LUMPUR

THE long awaited cabinet reshuffle by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim finally happened yesterday, with the prime minister announcing the appointment of five ministers and five deputy ministers.

Four of them were fresh faces, while five former ministers returned. Anwar also split the Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Ministry into the Energy Transition and Public Utilities Ministry, and Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Ministry.

The Communications and Digital Ministry was also split into the Communications Ministry and the Digital Ministry.

Anwar said this was done to meet current needs.

He added that the line-up change was made after discussions with party leaders in the unity government.

"After fulfilling our duties as best as we could in one year, we are now trying some adjustments. The situation has changed, not only based on past performance, but also economic developments, people's issues, including cost of living that must be addressed, as well as reception at the international level that places changes to a foreign minister's duty," he said during a press conference at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

Anwar said issues in education, as well as the government's efforts in exploring new fields such as artificial intelligence (AI) and digital transformation, prompted him to make adjustments.

He said the swearing-in at the Istana Negara only involved new



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says the new line-up will remain if there are no new issues, PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH -

ministers and deputies.

"If (the cabinet) performs well and there is no outside pressure, or new problems such as digital (issues), I don't think there is a need to make any more changes (in the line-up) for the next four years."

The announcement saw the number of ministers expanded from 28 to 31, while the number of deputy ministers was increased from 27 to 29.

The new ministers were Titiwangsa member of parliament (MP) and Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani as the plantation and commodities minister; Damansara MP and DAP deputy chairman Gobind Singh Deo (digital minister); Kuala Selangor MP Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (health minister); and Employees' Provident Fund chief executive officer Senator Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan (finance minister II).

Johari was finance minister II in former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's government from June 2016 until May 2018.

He held the Titiwangsa seat from May 2013 to May 2018, lost it in the 2018 general election, and regained it last year.

Former deputy finance minister Steven Sim Chee Keong has been promoted to a full minister in charge of human resources.

The 41-year-old Bukit Mertajam MP, who is the youngest member in the cabinet, replaces DAP's V. Sivakumar, who is the only minister to be dropped.

Sim's previous post is now held by Lim Hui Ying, the sister of DAP chairman and former finance minister Lim Guan Eng.

Two deputy ministers dropped included Ramkarpal Singh, who held the law and institutional reform portfolio. The Bukit Gelugor MP was replaced by Ipoh Barat MP M. Kula Segaran, who was human resources minister in the 2018 PH government.

Ramkarpal's brother, Gobind, is back as the digital minister. He was the communications and multimedia minister in the 2018 PH administration.

Beaufort MP Siti Aminah Aching was Umno's sole casualty in the reshuffle, with her post as deputy plantation and commodities minister taken over by Chan Foong Hin. Chan was deputy agriculture and food security minister prior to this.

While Siti Aminah is out, Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Noraini Ahmad is back in government as deputy women, family and community development minister.

PKR's Datuk R. Ramanan was named deputy entrepreneur and cooperatives development minister. Ramanan, who is Sungai Buloh MP, is also chairman of the Malaysian Indian Transformation Unit, or Mitra.

Anwar said Dzulkefly had been recalled as health minister as his experience was needed to strengthen the ministry.

"The ministry is burdened with many problems, some of which were inherited, while others fulfilled the people's need for better healthcare."

Dzulkefly replaces Dr Zaliha Mustafa, who is now minister in the Prime Minister's Department (federal territories).

He was health minister in the 2018 PH government.