

The focus is on economics



New line-up: Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah with Anwar and his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail in a group photo with the newly-appointed ministers after a ceremony at Istana Negara in Kuala Lumpur. - Bernama

Shake-up sees new and old faces brought in to tackle nation's issues

PUTRAJAYA: One year into his administration, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has expanded his Cabinet to 31 ministers in what he described as a move to meet current challenges and demands.

The Prime Minister had also roped in a technocrat, brought back three former ministers and split two ministries.

When he unveiled his Cabinet on Dec 2 last year, Anwar named 28 ministers.

His new 31-member Cabinet is the same size as the one of his predecessor Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob but one fewer than Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's line-up of 32 ministers.

The new Cabinet saw the appointment of Employees Provident Fund (EPF) chief executive officer Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan as Second Finance Minister, a move which Anwar said was to ensure the ministry was led by a strong and professional team.

"This will ensure we are on the right track and focused on the economy, and not be sidetracked or diverted by political pressures.

"Furthermore, he has shown

competency and ability and has managed EPF affairs satisfactorily," said Anwar when asked about Amir Hamzah's appointment.

Anwar had also brought back three former ministers - Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad is the new Health Minister, Gobind Singh Deo will helm the newly formed Digital Ministry while Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani has been made the Plantation and Commodities Minister.

Dr Dzulkefly helmed the Health Ministry while Gobind was Communications and Multimedia Minister in Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's Cabinet between 2018 and 2020.

Johari was the Second Finance Minister during Datuk Seri Najib Razak's administration.

The Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Ministry, headed by Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, has been divided into Energy Transition and Public Utilities, and Natural Resources and Sustainability.

As a reflection of the administration's focus on growing the renewable energy sector, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri

Fadillah Yusof has been tasked with the Energy Transition and Public Utilities portfolio.

Nik Nazmi will now be in charge of Natural Resources and Sustainability.

Fadillah, who previously held the Plantation and Commodities portfolio, will also be handling Sabah and Sarawak matters.

Another ministry that was split was the Communications and Digital Ministry formerly headed by Fahmi Fadzil. It is now divided into Communications Ministry and Digital Ministry respectively.

Datuk Armizan Mohd Aji will now permanently hold the position of Domestic Trade and Cost of Living portfolio - after having been the acting minister for the past five months following the death of Datuk Seri Salahuddin Ayub.

Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin is now the Defence Minister and his previous Higher Education portfolio is now held by Datuk Seri Zambray Abdul Kadir, who had helmed Foreign Affairs.

Zambray's post is now held by former Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan while for-

mer Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa is Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of Federal Territories.

Steven Sim, who was a Deputy Finance Minister, was promoted to a full ministerial position - he is now the Human Resources Minister.

The leader who held that portfolio, V. Sivakumar has been dropped.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi remains as Rural and Regional Development Minister and is also in charge of the National Disaster Management Agency.

Anwar added that all ministers would still have their salaries cut by 20% until the economy recovers.

"But this will not involve the Prime Minister's pay because there is no salary," he said in jest.