

CANDIDATE SELECTED

New domestic trade minister to be announced soon

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said a replacement for the post of domestic trade and cost of living minister, formerly helmed by the late Datuk Seri Salahuddin Ayub, has been selected.

He said the new minister would be announced soon.

"We have a replacement, and we will announce it as soon as possible," he said after prayers at the Surau Al-Furqan here yesterday.

The prime minister was also asked on the results of the approval rating survey by Merdeka Centre, which showed that his

number had dropped to 50 per cent compared with 68 per cent in its December poll last year.

This, said Merdeka Centre, was due to rising concern over the country's economy.

Anwar said the study only polled 1,200 Malaysians.

"We need to approach the other 32 million people here."

Asked to comment on the four-day ceasefire between Hamas and Israel in Palestine, Anwar said it brought only "some relief".

He said Palestinians were still up against a "brutal regime", which had openly said that it



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim having lunch with members of Surau Al-Furqan, Presint 11 in Putrajaya yesterday.
BERNAMA PIC

would continue with attacks.

"This is very worrying to us. Malaysia is open to sending anything (whether aid or volunteers during the ceasefire), and we will agree to this.

"However, it is subject to the joint decision by Arab and Is-

lamic nations, and neighbouring countries around Palestine."

On Wednesday, Hamas said it had reached a four-day ceasefire agreement with Israel under Qatari-Egyptian mediation.

Under the agreement mediated by Qatar, Hamas had agreed

to release 50 Israelis held captive in exchange for 150 Palestinians detained in Israeli jails.

It also included a four-day fighting pause and would allow the entry of 300 humanitarian aid and supply trucks into the Gaza Strip.