

Jamaluddin set for Putrajaya return, now special envoy to US
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 18 — Ambassador to the United States Datuk Seri Jamaluddin Jarjis will take up a new role as “envoy-at-large” to the superpower after his current contract ends in April, allowing the Najib loyalist to put in more hours in Putrajaya ahead of the general election.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman told The Malaysian Insider the Rompin MP will retain his ministerial status “while having more time to discharge his duties as an elected representative.”

“He won’t be stationed in America but in KL and will aid the new ambassador as it is a big and important country and his expertise will still be needed,” the Kimanis MP said.

The former finance and domestic trade minister is the main architect behind Datuk Seri Najib Razak’s initiatives under the 1 Malaysia banner to ease inflationary pressure since inflation hit a two-year high of three per cent last March and steadily climbed to 3.3 per cent in November.

Schemes such as the Perumahan Rakyat 1 Malaysia to increase the supply of medium-cost urban housing, the Kedai Rakyat 1 Malaysia thrift store chain, and low-priced food from Restoren Menu Rakyat 1 Malaysia were introduced last year.

Budget 2012 also saw Najib announcing a RM500 Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia cash stimulus to each household with a collective monthly income of below RM3,000, at a total cost of RM2.6 billion.

Jamaluddin’s return will likely see Putrajaya ramping up measures to mitigate rising cost of living ahead of the general election Najib must call by April next year.

Anifah also said the move was already approved by the prime minister and was now being vetted by the US Department of State.

Jamaluddin was dropped from the Cabinet by Tun Abdullah Badawi after Barisan Nasional (BN) suffered its worst electoral result in 2008 and ceded its customary two-third hold of Parliament.

But Najib appointed him as ambassador to Malaysia’s fourth-largest trading partner and largest foreign investor after coming into power in April 2009.

The prime minister has since had several bilateral meetings with US President Barack Obama, the most recent being on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit in Bali last November.

Other special envoys with ministerial status under the Najib administration include former MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and former MCA president Tan Sri Ong Ka Ting,

who are in charge of South Asia and China respectively.

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