

Najib names new Cabinet with old-timers, some new faces
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 15 – Datuk Seri Najib Razak named a new Cabinet today dominated by senior Umno leaders and new faces from Sabah and Sarawak and the surprise inclusion of Transparency International chief Datuk Paul Low.

The number of Umno veterans and Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin in the Cabinet is the clearest indication he is keeping his eyes trained on Umno's election due later this year.

Khairy is now the Youth and Sports Minister while Low is a minister in the Prime Minister's department together with another new face, Malayan Banking Berhad chief executive officer Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar.

Another new face is Kota Belud MP Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan, who will lead the new Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing & Local Government.

Hindraf chairman P. Waytha Moorthy has also been named as deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

"Over the past months and years, divisions have opened up in Malaysian society. Now it is time for all of us, in government and beyond, to put the bitterness behind us, and work towards national reconciliation – and national unity.

"It is in that spirit that I have asked these men and women to serve, not just as ministers, but as a unity Cabinet. Together we will act to bring about national reconciliation, secure Malaysia's economic future, and build a stronger, more harmonious society," Najib said in a live broadcast on national television this evening.

He added that the new Cabinet will be responsible to continue his economic and political reforms under the transformation programme he kickstarted four years ago upon taking office as prime minister.

"The new ministers bring both the measured calm of experience, and the vibrant energy of new ideas; a grounding in anti-corruption and human rights law, and an appreciation for the dynamism of the private sector," he said.

However, Umno hogged a whopping 21 out of 30 ministerial positions.

All three Umno vice-presidents were kept onboard with Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein taking on two monumental portfolios, Defence and Transport while Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi got Home Affairs and Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal being retained as Rural and Regional Development Minister.

Former Perlis Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim was also brought onboard as a minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah also scored a senior position as the finance minister II and Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Mansor was awarded the Federal Territories minister post.

Former Terengganu menteri besar Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh was appointed education minister II after the higher education portfolio that had been helmed for the past two terms by Datuk Khaled Nordin, now Johor menteri besar but who sat out the federal contest in Election 2013.

In a nod to the MIC's performance in the May 5 polls, its president Datuk Seri G. Palanivel was announced the Minister of Natural Resources & Environment while Datuk Seri S. Subramaniam was reposted as Health Minister, a position that had customarily been held by the MCA.

The MCA, which had vowed not to take up any Cabinet posts if they gained fewer seats in the May 5 general election than the 15 obtained in Election 2008, were fully absent in the line-up.

Najib instead chose to fill in the vacancies onboard with MPs from Borneo Malaysia, in a nod to the significant wins from the Barisan Nasional's vote bank there.

Datuk Seri Anifah Aman kept his Foreign Ministry, while Kota Belud MP Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan filled in the redesignated Urban Wellbeing, Housing & Local Government Minister spot.

Fellow Sabahan Datuk Seri Maximus Johnity Ongkili switched over to Energy, Green Technology & Water Minister from his past stint as Science, Technology and Innovation Minister, which has been taken on by Upko's Datuk Dr Ewon Ebin.

Sarawak's Datuk Seri Richard Riot Jaem took over as Human Resources Minister from MIC's Datuk Seri S. Subramaniam, while Datuk Seri Douglas Uggah Embas is head of the Ministry of Plantation Industries & Commodities.

PBB's Datuk Rohani Abdul Karim was appointed Women, Family and Community Development Minister, which had been handled by Najib after he dropped Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil from her government post following public uproar over her family's cattle-farming scandal back in 2009.

Najib had an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah at Istana Negara at noon today to get approval for his new Cabinet line-up.

According to the statement issued by the Prime Minister's Department, the King has agreed that ceremony to present letters of appointment, as well as for the appointed ministers and deputy ministers to take the oath of office, loyalty and secrecy be held at the palace at 9.30am on Thursday.

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