

## Non-politicians' appointment a positive move for govt



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*Another positive takeaway is the exclusion of several party leaders who are being charged in court*

**by ALIFAH ZAINUDDIN & HARIZAH KAMEL/ pic by BERNAMA**

THE appointment of non-politicians into the new Cabinet as announced by Prime Minister (PM) Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin signals a positive move, given the noticeable omission of some political heavyweights and the designation of apolitical subject matter experts in key ministries.

International Islamic University Malaysia's associate professor of law Dr Khairil Azmin Mokhtar cited the appointment of the Federal Territories mufti Datuk Seri Dr Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri (*picture*) as the new minister for religious affairs as a constructive point.

"If you look at it, the head of religion in states are the sultans, and for the country, it is the Yang di-Pertuan Agong — and all of them are non-political. Therefore, the appointment of the mufti as minister of religion can be viewed as an indication that religion should be neutral and not politicised," Khairil Azmin said.

“The same goes to the appointment of CIMB Group Holdings Bhd group CEO and ED Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz as the new finance minister. These are key portfolios which are being held by non-politicians.

“The new Cabinet also takes into account all parties. There is a dedicated ministry to look into affairs of Sabah and Sarawak and a coordinating minister from Gabungan Parti Sarawak — which reflects the importance of the two states in the new administration,” he told *The Malaysian Reserve* when contacted yesterday.

Another positive takeaway is the exclusion of several party leaders who are being charged in court.

“I hope this can be accepted as a political convention where those are being tried should voluntarily step down or move away from positions in the Cabinet.



“Although legally it is permissible, we know that politics is all about the perception between leaders and the people, so it is important to give the right signals,” Khairil Azmin said.

Meanwhile, on the absence of a deputy PM, Khairil Azmin said there is no provision in the Federal Constitution on the appointment of a deputy PM.

“It is completely the prerogative of the PM to decide how big his Cabinet is, who the ministers are and whether he wants a deputy PM.

“Maybe, he doesn’t need it now, but in the future, he may appoint one or add more ministers into his Cabinet. There is also a lack of clarity on what the duties of a coordinating minister are.

“If we look at Singapore, these ministers are usually those with experience who will coordinate various agencies and ministries to execute a policy or tackle things holistically,” he said. “The PM emphasised on delivery, so the role of a coordinating minister will be key.”

Former deputy Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM) Minister Hannah Yeoh took to Twitter to express her concern on the appointment of a PAS MP as deputy minister of KPWKM.

“What will happen to our national road map to fight child marriage with the appointment of MP from PAS as deputy minister of @KPWKM? All the best leading a ministry like this by a coalition of religion and race-based parties,” she said.

The unveiling of Cabinet ranked fifth on Twitter’s trending list as Malaysians took to the platform to express their opinion on the new appointments.

Among those who tweeted was the Women's Aid Organisation ED Sumitra Visvanathan who said she was dismayed by the lack of representation, especially among women in the new government.

"With the way the government was formed, talking about representation seems hollow. Nonetheless, we are disappointed to see women continuing to be underrepresented — only 15.6% of ministers are women. #Cabinet," she tweeted.

She continued her tweet with a thread, stating that the people voted for reforms and that the Cabinet must clarify their intentions to continue the effort. Some of the reforms mentioned were the Sexual Harassment Act, the Gender Equality Act, anti-discrimination provisions in the Employment Act, and the enactment of anti-stalking laws.

User @syedmzhafri commented that the line-up will not satisfy everyone and that it was not short of surprises.

"Pretty decent Cabinet. Can't satisfy everyone/anyone. Some surprises here and there. Good luck to all ministers and deputy ministers. Work starts now! #cabinet #muhyiddin," he tweeted.

"I would like to congratulate all the Cabinet ministers appointed. All ministers have been filtered by SPRM (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission) and PDRM (Royal Malaysia Police). With this new coalition and appointment, I hope this new government will focus more on better country development #cabinet," Twitter user @ainishaffy said.