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Sabbaruddin-Umno (With Pix)

SABBARUDDIN'S FIRST DAY AS UMNO SECRETARY-GENERAL

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 29 (Bernama) -- Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik began his duties today as the new Umno Secretary-General with a visit to the party headquarters to meet the staff.

Incidentally, the party headquarters is on the 38th floor of the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) and just two floors below is Sabbaruddin's ministerial office.

"I know many of the staff at the party headquarters and sometimes we share the lift," he told reporters at his ministry.

His appointment as Secretary-General succeeding Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat was announced by Umno President and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad after the party's supreme council meeting last night.

Sabbaruddin said as Secretary-General he would ensure that party administration functioned excellently.

He would make several proposals to the party staff at a meeting on Monday.

Asked whether he would make any reshuffle, Sabbaruddin said: "Why should staff who are loyal to the Umno organisation be transferred out?"

His appointment has been well received by party leaders.

Pahang Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob is confident that Sabbaruddin will discharge his duties well in view of his vast experience as minister, politician and administrative officer.

"As a person who knows Sabbaruddin well, I believe the post of Umno Secretary-General is ideal for him," he said.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman described Sabbaruddin as an experienced party member who was capable continuing the good work done by Mohamed.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said Sabbaruddin's appointment was a timely decision to strengthen party solidarity and unity.

"All Johor Umno members support the appointment," he said.

Abdul Ghani, who has been named Johor Umno Liaison Committee Chairman, succeeding Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, pledged to work hard for the party's interests.

"As Chairman I will ensure that the government is the party and the party is the government," he said.

MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the MCA respected Umno's decision and would continue to maintain its good relations with the party. -- BERNAMA

MH MAI AAM