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A busy official to the last day at ministry

TAN Sri Clifford Herbert yesterday bade farewell to the Ministry of Finance, his second "home" for the last two decades, in his trademark serious-yet-approachable style.

The 56-year-old - credited for much of the behind-the-scene work for the ministry both in the local front and abroad - was rushing off to meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Prime Minister's Department on his last day as the Treasury secretary-general.

Yet, he found time to shake hands with the 100-odd Treasury staff who crowded the ministry lobby to personally say goodbye to him and listen to his parting words of advice.

He even had time to hold an impromptu Press conference at the lobby saying that the Press corps had always been kind and helpful to him and the ministry.

On his future plans, Herbert said: "For the time being, I will stay on as the chairman of KLIA (KL International Airport Bhd) until the project is completed."

Herbert, who began his career as the assistant secretary at the Public Service Department in 1964, was offered a one-year contract to stay on at the ministry after reaching the retirement age last year.

He is succeeded by deputy secretary-general (policy) for the ministry, Datuk Dr Aris Othman, who officially takes over tomorrow.

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