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Mohamed Ali (Man in the News)

RUBBER TAPPER'S SON MAKES IT TO THE TOP

MELAKA, Dec 2 (Bernama) -- Datuk Wira Mohamed Ali Rustam who was sworn in as Melaka's ninth Chief Minister today knows what it is to be poor and how hard work pays.

Born of rubber tapper parents at Kampung Bukit Katil, Melaka on Aug 24, 1949, Mohamed Ali is the second of four children.

After attending the village school in Bukit Katil from 1955, he went to the nearby Sekolah Semabok and then on to the Melaka High School.

A determined person eager to learn and progress, he became an off-campus student of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and graduated with a degree in Development Economics.

"I am a leader from the lower ranks and know the problems faced by the people particularly the folks in the rural areas," he once said.

He has maintained a low profile and always finds time to listen to the problems of the people be they fishermen or vegetable farmers.

His warm and friendly disposition has endeared him to any and every person.

He was Special Assistant to then Melaka Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik before contesting the Ayer Molek state seat in 1986.

Previous to that he had worked with then National Electricity Board (NEB) and had also served as Deputy Director of the Community Development Department (Kemas) in Kedah, Director of Kemas in Perlis and Kemas Director of the Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory and also Director of Melaka Kemas.

After winning the Ayer Molek seat in 1986, he was appointed State Executive Councillor for Industrial Development and Local Government. He also assumed the post of Deputy Chairman of the Melaka State Development Corporation (PKNM) and Chairman of the State Consumer Affairs Council.

In the General Election of 1990, he stood for election in the Sungai Udang state constituency and on winning the seat he was appointed State Executive Councillor for Industrial, Science and Technology Development.

In the last General Election in 1995, Mohamed Ali was chosen to stand in the Batu Berendam Parliamentary seat which he won and then was appointed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Deputy Transport Minister.

In a Cabinet reshuffle last year, the Prime Minister appointed him Deputy Health Minister.

In the recent General Election he switched to the state seat of Paya Rumpit, vacated by former Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin.

He won the seat with a majority of 2,876 votes against a DAP candidate.

Mohamed Ali is also President of the 4B Youth Movement of Malaysia.

He is married to Asmah Abdul Rahman and they have three children.

-- BERNAMA

NI AAM