

26/07/2000

Ahmad Mokhtar appointed to top post

FORMER Malaysian ambassador to Peru, Datuk Ahmad Mokhtar Selat, 52, has been appointed one of two deputy secretaries-general of Asean based in Jakarta.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Ahmad Mokhtar's appointment for a three-year period beginning Aug 1 had been approved by the Asean Standing Committee and endorsed by the Asean Ministerial Meeting.

"It is Malaysia's turn to name its candidate for the position rotated among the 10 Asean member countries," he said, adding that Ahmad Mokhtar would be seconded to the post taking charge of the secretariat's corporate affairs.

Ahmad Mokhtar is taking over from Indonesia's Immanuel Robert Inkiriwang whose term had expired.

The other deputy secretary-general is Tran Duc Minh of Vietnam who was appointed recently to replace Suthad Setboonsarng of Thailand.

Speaking to newsmen after a dinner hosted by the Malaysian Embassy in Bangkok on Monday night, Syed Hamid said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had also agreed to the appointment.

He is leading the 22-member Malaysian delegation to the 33rd Asean Ministerial Meeting/Post Ministerial Conference from July 24-30 hosted by Thailand.

Also present at the event were Syed Hamid's wife Datin Seri Syarifah Aziah, Foreign Ministry secretary-general Datuk Abdul Kadir Mohamad, Asean director-general Datuk Hsu King Bee and ambassador Datuk Syed Ariff Fadzillah.

Ahmad Mokhtar, now the Under Secretary for West Asia, Africa and Organisation of the Islamic Conference at Wisma Putra, is best remembered for the 1996 hostage taking incident in Lima, Peru.

He was among some 500 people including foreign envoys who were held hostage by members of the Tupac Amaru Revolution Movement who took over the official residence of the Japanese Ambassador on Dec 17 that year.

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