

19 DEC 2000

Rais-Ainum

RAIS CONFIDENT NEW A-G WILL DISCHARGE DUTIES WELL

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 19 (Bernama) -- Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Rais Yatim has expressed confidence that the newly appointed attorney-general, Datuk Ainum Mohamed Saaid, will be able to discharge her duties well.

Dr Rais said Ainum had previously served as a senior officer in the Attorney-General's Chambers and was experienced in the legal field and well versed in financial laws.

"I am confident Ainum will be assisted by experienced and professional legal officers, and she will have a congenial working environment with the (impending) move of the Attorney-General's Chambers (to Putrajaya)," he told reporters at the Dewan Negara lobby.

Ainum, currently deputy chief executive of the Securities Commission, was today named the new attorney-general for a two-year term from Jan 1.

The Office of the Prime Minister said in a statement that Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, on the advice of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, had consented to her appointment.

Ainum, 54, will succeed Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah, whose term of service expires on Dec 31.

Asked if Ainum's appointment would bring about changes in the country's legal administration system, Dr Rais said he did anticipate some changes "next year and beyond".

This was because there was now a new chief justice and a new attorney-general, both "rule of law people" based on their association with the government and experience, he said.

"The personality involved is not important but with their leadership at various compartments of the administration of justice such as the court and the chambers, I am confident that beginning 2001 we will begin re-examining the administration of justice in the country in a more orderly and fair manner," he said.

Dr Rais said there was a need to look into various aspects of the administration of justice and not "simply cry out about justice without attaching concrete meaning to it".

"We may also have to look into the way citizens are treated to various mechanisms of arrest, detention or imprisonment," he added.

Meanwhile, DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang today congratulated Ainum on her appointment.

He said her appointment was not only a personal achievement but also broke another glass ceiling for women in the country.

One of the greatest challenges of Ainum as attorney-general was to restore full public confidence in the independence, integrity and professionalism of her office, he said in a statement.

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