

New political secretary for PM

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Matthias Chang to serve Dr M on Chinese issues

PUTRAJAYA, Wed: Lawyer Matthias Chang Wen Chieh was today sworn in as political secretary to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Chang, 51, is the first non-Malay to be appointed political secretary to the prime minister.

He took his oath of office and oath of secrecy before Mahathir at the Prime Minister's Office here. The brief ceremony

was witnessed by Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Osman.

Mahathir said he needs a Chinese political secretary to serve him especially on matters pertaining to the Chinese community.

"In this country, 26% of the people are of Chinese origin. I think a Chinese political secretary will be able to serve me on Chinese issues," he told reporters.

"There is a provision for me to appoint a political secretary, so obviously I appoint one," he said.

When approached later, Chang declined to elaborate on his appointment.

Also sworn in before the prime minister was Reezal Merican Naina Merican, 28, who was appointed political secretary to Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Shahrizat Jalil.

Reezal, who holds a

degree in Arabic and Literature from the International Islamic University Malaysia, is an executive committee member of the Kepala Batas Umno Youth division. He is married and has two daughters.

Reezal is also vice-president of the Penang chapter of the Federation of Peninsular Malay Students (GPMS) and a member of the GPMS central executive committee.