

Mixed reaction to PM's first Chinese political secretary

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PETALING JAYA, Thurs: The appointment of lawyer Matthias Chang has sparked mixed reaction from political parties as to whether he will be able to effectively represent the Chinese community.

"I welcome this move as I think the prime minister will have access to his political secretary on a daily basis," Transport Minister Datuk Seri Ling Liong Sik told reporters after opening the 7th Asia-Pacific Ports and Shipping Conference and Exhibition in Subang today.

"This will ensure his awareness of what is happening in the Chinese community at a very much higher level."

Chang, 51, the first non-Malay political secretary to the PM, took his oath of office and oath of secrecy yesterday. He will advise

Mahathir on matters pertaining to Chinese issues.

Ling said Mahathir is given weekly briefings by the MCA, Gerakan and SUPP during cabinet meetings, but now he will have daily access to issues concerning the Chinese.

DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang questioned Chang's credentials and asked if he was a suitable choice.

"It is not going to be an easy job for Matthias Chang, as reflected from the fact that not all Chinese could get his name right and very little is known about his involvement in Chinese community affairs," he said in a statement.

He called on Chang to help clear the misconceptions and misunderstandings about the Chinese following Mahathir's recent statements.