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`Promotions of six City Hall officials a routine exercise'

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The promotions of six senior City Hall officials, including heads of departments, were a routine exercise, outgoing Datuk Bandar Tan Sri Kamaruzzaman Shariff said today.

He said the announcement of the promotions made yesterday was "nothing extraordinary".

"It was based on a collective management decision," he told a Press conference at City Hall.

It was reported in an English daily that the exercise was a "revamp" and "reshuffling" which was received with mixed response by City Hall staff.

"It was not even a revamp or a reshuffling, nor a restructuring exercise."

Looking visibly annoyed, he said the move was not done simply because he was leaving office.

"It was just the usual promotional exercise made during year end," said Kamaruzzaman, who retires on Thursday.

Senior deputy secretary-general in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Mohmad Shaid Mohd Taufek, 55, replaces the 59-year-old Kamaruzzaman.

Mohmad Shaid will take over as the sixth Datuk Bandar on Friday.

Kamaruzzaman said he was proud and happy to have served six years as Datuk Bandar. He thanked the Government and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for giving him the opportunity to serve the people.

"In Kuala Lumpur, there is no State Government. City Hall is at the forefront of everything. So it was very challenging.

"We have to meet the needs of different city folk, depending on their geographical location."

Asked about the challenges faced during his stint as Datuk Bandar, Kamaruzzaman said it took a lot of effort to make the city ready for the Commonwealth Games in 1998.

"We have to prepare logistics, programmes, activities, decorations and ensure safety for the athletes and delegates.

"It was also challenging to keep the city clean and beautiful, as well as resettling squatters and reducing traffic congestion."

He said by next year, 10,000 squatters in the city would be resettled. As for traffic congestion, he said this would be greatly reduced with the establishment of better public transport.

Kamaruzzaman said the main vision of City Hall was to ensure a quality of life for every resident.

On development, Kamaruzzaman said 80 per cent of the city was fully developed.

He hoped that Kuala Lumpur, which has a 1.4 million population, will be a famous city of international standards in the near future.

"We must be thankful because the city is one of the safest places in the world to live in."

On his future plans, Kamaruzzaman, who has two daughters and a son, said: "I am going to rest and spend time with my family."

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