

23 JAN 2001

Hamid-Senator

ABDUL HAMID SWORN IN AS SENATOR

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 23 (Bernama) -- Incoming Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin was sworn in as a senator before Dewan Negara President Datuk Michael Chen at Parliament House today.

He is one of two new ministers to join the Cabinet. The other is Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, who has been promoted to Women's Affairs Minister.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad made the announcement of government appointments last Wednesday.

Abdul Hamid, 56, who succeeds Datuk Seri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, said he would continue with the good work of his predecessor.

"What's good I shall continue...I'll also look into areas that needed to be further improved and expanded," he told reporters after the swearing-in.

Dr Abdul Hamid, who resigned as Minister in the Prime Minister's Department on Jan 5, has been appointed Religious Adviser to the Prime Minister.

His successor, who recently retired as Director-General of the Islamic Advancement Department (Jakim), said there was still much to be done to assimilate Islamic values in the government administration but denied that implementation of Islamic tenets in the country's administration was weak.

He said implementation of Islamic principles had proceeded well as evident from the development of Islamic institutions and uniformity in Syariah laws.

Asked on the split among the Malays due to religious politics played by the opposition especially PAS, he said: "That's normal....I think we can learn together. I studied Islam, they also studied Islam...together we can understand Islam based on Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah, what's the point of twisting the facts.

"We must return to the true Islamic teachings. There's nothing that can strain our relations. We can have differences of opinion but it should not lead to divisiveness among us," he said.

Abdul Hamid and Shahrizat would take their oath of office before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah on Jan 30.

-- BERNAMA

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