

27 MAR 2001

Chong-Oath

CHONG SWORN IN AS SABAH'S NEW CM

KOTA KINABALU, March 27 (Bernama) -- Parti Liberal Demokratik (LDP) president Datuk Chong Kah Kiat today took his oath of office as Sabah's new Chief Minister before the Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Sakaran Dandai at Istana Negeri here.

High Court Judge Datuk Charles Ho witnessed the swearing-in.

Chong, 53, representing the Chinese community, succeeded Datuk Osu Sukam upon expiry of Osu's two-year tenure under Sabah's rotating chief ministership.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced Chong's appointment on March 16.

Chong, who is the state assemblyman for Kudat, will later name his Cabinet line up and the state ministers are scheduled to be sworn in at 2pm today at the same venue.

Born in Kudat, north of Sabah on June 2, 1948, Chong is the only leader from the days of the Berjaya government who managed to survive the vagaries of Sabah politics and finally succeeded to return to the helm of the government.

The law graduate from the Victoria University, New Zealand, first became active in politics when he contested and won the Kudat state seat in the 1981 Sabah election.

He was then appointed assistant minister to the Chief Minister in 1982 and held the position until he lost to the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) candidate in the state elections of 1985 and 1986.

Chong and several other leaders then formed LDP in 1989 and became president of the party two years later.

He did not contest in the 1994 state election but in 1995 he was appointed senator and later minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

He however resigned from the Federal cabinet in March 1999 to contest the Kudat state seat in the Sabah election that year and managed to regain the seat.

LDP, the oldest component party of the Barisan Nasional in Sabah, has two out of the 54 state legislative seats and one Parliament seat in Sandakan.

Before this appointment, Chong was the Minister of Tourism Development, Environment, Science and Technology. He is the 12th Chief Minister of Sabah.

Also present at the swearing in ceremony was the former Chief Minister Datuk Osu Sukam and members of the former cabinet and leaders of state component parties of Barisan Nasional.

-- BERNAMA

NT JS DVS