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Mahathir-Secretary

DR M SAYS NEW SECRETARY WILL HELP HIM DEAL WITH CHINESE COMMUNITY

KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the appointment of 51-year old lawyer Matthias Chang Wen Chieh as his political secretary is to help him deal in matters pertaining the Chinese community.

He said he had chosen a Chinese as one of his political secretaries because the Chinese represented about 26 per cent of Malaysia's population.

"I think a Chinese political secretary will be able to serve me where the Chinese are concerned," he told a news conference after delivering a keynote address at the 10th World Economic Development Congress at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here today.

He was asked to comment on Chang's swearing-in as his political secretary earlier today, making the lawyer the first non-Malay political secretary to the prime minister.

Dr Mahathir already has two Malay political secretaries.

Chang took his oath of office and oath of secrecy before Dr Mahathir at the Prime Minister's Office in Putrajaya today.

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

Chang declined to elaborate on his appointment when approached by reporters after the swearing-in.

Earlier, when he was first asked at the PWTC press conference why he appointed a Chinese as political secretary, Dr Mahathir replied in lighter vein: "Because I need a political secretary."

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

Asked whether he would similarly appoint a Chinese press secretary, the prime minister said: "It's not as important, perhaps."

-- BERNAMA

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