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Chong-Duck

I INTEND TO MAKE SURE MY TEAM WORKS VERY HARD, SAYS CHONG

KOTA KINABALU, March 27 (Bernama) -- New Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat has pledged "to work very hard for the betterment of the people of Sabah".

Chong, who was sworn in before the Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Sakaran Dandai at Istana Negeri here, said he believed that the bottom line for a successful administration was hard work.

"Well, the people will judge...(but) I think the bottom line is performance and hard work and I intend to ensure that my team will work, and works very hard so as not to disappoint the people of Sabah," he told a news conference after announcing the portfolio of the new Sabah cabinet ministers.

Chong, who was appointed to the post under the state's unique rotation system, was responding to questions from journalists on how he would overcome the problem of "lame duck chief ministers" associated with the state's chief ministership rotation system.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad previously said that one of the problems with the system was that it tended to create a series of "lame duck chief ministers".

"The people do not care much with what he does as they are just waiting for him to be replaced by someone else," Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying.

Chong said: "I hope that in the next two years and for the future, everyone will work as a team. Not only the ministers, the assistant ministers but also all of us who are participating in the running of the state".

Chong, who is Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) president, however said he would leave it to the people to judge his performance.

"Of course, only time will tell whether we will succeed," he said.

On whether he was now the Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman by virtue of him being the chief minister, Chong said he received his letter of appointment as coalition chief in the state recently.

On talk that there were last-minute attempts last night to prevent the oath-taking ceremony from taking place today, Chong said: "...the swearing-in today went on very smoothly and all the Barisan Nasional (BN) assemblymen gave me their support which I appreciate".

Pressed further on whether there were ever such attempts, he said: "I don't think I am in the position to give you any definitive response because in the last two days, I have been literally up to my neck to sort out the positioning of the cabinet ministers and their assistant ministers".

He was also asked on whether he would be filling some senior posts in the state such as the Director of Sabah Foundation as well as the State Attorney-General which were either left vacant or were filled on an acting basis.

"I will look into that very quickly," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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