

27 MAR 2001

Osu-Duties

OSU PASSES ON THE BATON TO CHONG

KOTA KINABALU, March 27 (Bernama) -- Datuk Osu Sukam who has completed his two-year term as Sabah Chief Minister under the state's system of rotating the post, today handed over power to his successor Datuk Chong Kah Kiat.

The brief handing over ceremony was held at the Chief Minister's Office on the 28th floor of the Sabah Foundation Building here at about 11.30am.

The ceremony took place about an hour after Chong was sworn-in before Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Sakaran Dandai at Istana Negeri.

The two men were all smiles with Osu, 52, wishing Chong "Happy Working". He then shook hands with the new Chief Minister and handed him over a file.

Chong then began his first day in office as Sabah Chief Minister, opening another chapter in the history of rotating the post, a unique system introduced in Sabah in 1994 when the Barisan Nasional assumed power.

Under the system a representative of the state's major communities, Chinese, Muslim Bumiputeras and Non-Muslim Bumiputeras would get to head the Sabah Government every two years.

Today is also the beginning of the new format in the rotation system with Muslim Bumiputeras getting two terms of two years each in one rotation cycle compared with one term each for Chinese and Non-Muslim Bumiputeras.

The new format was announced by Barisan Nasional Chairman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on March 16 after taking into account the fact that Sabah Umno was the largest party in the state assembly.

Under the new format, Chong 53, the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) assemblyman for Kudat and representative of the Chinese community will be at the helm of the state government for two years before the post reverts to a Muslim Bumiputera from Umno.

So far it is not known what new role Osu will play. However the Prime Minister who visited Sabah last week said he was thinking about the matter.

"We will think about it," the Prime Minister had said.

-- BERNAMA

HAK NT JS AAM