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Utusan Melayu to get new chairman

DATUK Hashim Makharudin is set to assume the position of executive chairman of Utusan Melayu (Malaysia) Bhd, publisher of the Utusan Malaysia and Mingguan Malaysia newspapers.

Sources say Hashim, who was special assistant and the chief press secretary to former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, will start work on Jan 1, 2004. He replaces current chairman Tan Sri Kamarul Ariffin.

Highly respected by people who have dealt with him, Hashim will bring many years of journalistic and political experience to Utusan Melayu.

He was a senior journalist with the national news agency Bernama before becoming press secretary to the then Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin in the late 1980s. He joined Dr Mahathir's office after Daim quit as finance minister the first time in 1991.

Utusan Melayu's biggest shareholder is the United Malays National Organisation (Umno). It is one of three listed newspaper groups in Malaysia which are directly linked to a major political party. The others are Star Publications (Malaysia) Bhd and Nanyang Press Holdings Bhd, which are controlled by Huaren Holdings Sdn Bhd, the investment arm of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA).