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Profile-Chan

CHAN KONG CHOY: FROM LECTURER TO MINISTER

KUALA LUMPUR, June 24 (Bernama) -- The Year of the Goat may have been a lucky year for former lecturer Datuk Chan Kong Choy.

A month after succeeding his mentor Datuk Seri Lim Ah Lek as MCA deputy president, Chan today took another step up the political ladder when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced his appointment as Transport Minister, the post previously held by former MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik.

Born on May 17, 1955 in Bentong, Pahang, Chan had his first taste of politics when the then MCA vice-president and Health Minister Tan Sri Chan Siang San lured him out of Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (now Universiti Putra Malaysia - UPM) and made him his political secretary in 1986.

Chan had his early education at Khai Mun Primary School, Bentong before continuing his studies in Catholics High School and Sulaiman Secondary School, also in Bentong.

He continued his upper secondary education at the Tunku Abdul Rahman College in Setapak before going to Universiti Malaya (UM) and obtained a first-class bachelor's degree in Chinese Studies.

For this, he received the UM Chancellor's Award for Excellence.

Upon completing a Diploma in Education course at the same university in 1980, Chan took up lecturing at UPM where he played a key role in setting up the Foreign Language Department.

Five years down the road, he took up the political secretary post before being picked to contest the Tanah Rata state seat in the 1986 general election where he beat DAP's Poon Man Kem with over 1,800 votes in majority.

He was appointed Pahang executive councillor for Welfare and Social Development before taking over the State Local Government and New Villages Committee in 1990, replacing Lim who resigned to contest the Bentong parliamentary by-election in 1989.

In the October 1990 general election, Chan contested the Lipis parliamentary seat, garnering a thumping victory over Semangat 46's Dr Amin Husaini Abdul Manan with a 4,222-vote majority.

On Oct 26, 1990, Chan was appointed deputy minister of culture, arts and tourism.

In the following general election, Chan, known as "KC" among party members, moved to Selayang, Selangor from his home state Pahang to contest the Selayang parliamentary seat.

He won the Selayang seat beating Zainul Amri Abdul Aziz, an independent, with a 38,627-vote majority.

On May 5, 1995, Chan was named the Energy, Telecommunications and Post deputy minister. The ministry was later re-named Ministry of Energy, Communications and Multimedia.

In the last general election, Chan contested the same parliamentary seat and beat DAP's Zaitun Kassim with a 8,835-vote majority. He was appointed deputy finance minister Dec 12 the same year.

The year 1999 was significant in Chan's political career when the MCA Youth chief, a post he held since 1990, decided to go for one of the four vice-president posts.

On July 17, 1999, Chan was elected as MCA vice-president, polling 1,650 votes to secure the fourth and last place among the party veeps.

Three years later, he was re-elected as MCA vice-president for the

second term following the move to maintain the status-quo in the party -- part of the peace plan aimed at resolving MCA's internal crisis.

Chan hit the "big time" when last May 23, he was named MCA deputy president by the party's central committee, succeeding Lim.

That nod by the party's highest decision-making body came in the wake of the decision by Dr Ling and Lim to step down simultaneously from their party posts as part of the MCA peace plan.

The central committee elected Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting to take over the helm of the party with Chan, as his deputy.

-- BERNAMA

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