

05 MAR 2003

Chong-Musa

MUSA ACTING CHIEF MINISTER FROM TODAY, SAYS CHONG

KOTA KINABALU, March 5 (Bernama) -- Chief Minister-designate Datuk Musa Aman will be the acting Chief Minister from today until he officially takes office as Chief Minister on March 27, Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat said today.

"I've conveyed to the state cabinet today on Musa being the acting Chief Minister and that he will be given the full support by members of the cabinet," he told reporters after chairing the state cabinet meeting.

Today's cabinet meeting was Chong's last as chief minister.

Chong will be on leave from tomorrow. During his leave, Chong will be away on tourism and trade-related working visits to the Philippines and China.

During the period, Musa, who is also State Finance Minister, will chair the state cabinet meeting.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday named Musa, who is also Sabah Umno chief, as Chong's successor under the state's unique rotation system for the chief minister's post.

While acknowledging that there would be some changes, Chong expressed full confidence in Musa's ability to lead the state and to continue the state's administration policies.

On the cabinet reshuffle following the leadership transition, Chong said it was up to Musa to form his team of cabinet ministers.

"We have decided on the successor, that's very important. On cabinet reshuffle, it's not a problem. I think when Datuk Musa officially assumes the post, he will decide on a strong team, especially to face the state election," he said.

The state election must be held by March next year.

Asked what he thought of the present state cabinet, Chong said there were "some very good people" in the line-up.

Chong thanked Dr Mahathir and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for the appointment of Musa, which put to rest months of intense speculations in Sabah.

"I'm very happy the transfer of leadership went on so smoothly," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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