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CM-designate's 1994 win a turning point

KOTA KINABALU, Tues. - Chief Minister-designate Datuk Musa Aman's meteoric rise in politics began when he won the Sungai Sibuga State seat in the 1994 State election.

After winning the seat, Musa was appointed to the sought-after post of Sabah Foundation director.

He was also made executive chairman of Sabah Economic Development Corporation. A well-known businessman before going into politics in 1991, Musa was appointed Minister in the Chief Minister's Department after he retained the Sibuga seat in the 1999 State election.

Musa was given the important finance portfolio in a minor State Cabinet reshuffle when Datuk Chong Kah Kiat took over the chief ministership from Datuk Osu Sukam in March 2001.

Musa was Sabah Umno treasurer before his appointment as the State Umno liaison committee chief in 2001.

Musa, who is Libaran Umno division head, is now the State Barisan Nasional treasurer.

Born on March 30, 1951, Musa is married to Datin Faridah Tussin and they have four children.

Musa, who holds a Masters in Business Administration from the Edith Cowan University in Australia, started his early education at St Paul School in Beaufort before moving to Sabah College and All Saints School in Kota Kinabalu.

Before entering politics full-time, Musa was Sabah Bumiputera Chambers of Commerce president and chairman of City Finance Bhd.

Musa's appointment as Chief Minister is under the rotation system practised in Sabah since March 19, 1994, when the Barisan Nasional took over the State Government from Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS).

The system provides an opportunity for Muslim Bumiputera, non-Muslim Bumiputera and Chinese leaders to assume the post of Chief Minister for a two-year term.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said during the 1994 State election campaign that the post would be rotated among the three races if the BN was elected to power.

In the 1994 elections, BN lost narrowly to the PBS led by Chief Minister Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan. However, BN assumed power in the State about a month later when several PBS assemblymen formed their own parties, which were later admitted into BN or joined BN components.

Then Sabah Umno chief Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai was the first Chief Minister to be appointed under the system. When Sakaran was appointed Yang di-Pertua Negeri in November 1994, Datuk Salleh Mohamad Said Keruak took over the chief ministership to complete the two-year term for the Muslim Bumiputera. After Salleh ended his tenure in May 27, 1996, Sabah Progressive Party president Datuk Yong Teck Lee, representing the Chinese community, was appointed to hold the post from May 28, 1996 to May 27, 1998.

Between May 28, 1998 and March 14, 1999, Tan Sri Bernard Dompok replaced Yong, this time to fulfil the non-Muslim Bumiputera term.

Dompok's term ended when the State election was held in March 1999 and after BN managed to continue with the State rule, Datuk Osu Sukam, representing the Muslim Bumiputera was made the Chief Minister.

He was Chief Minister from March 22, 1999 and March 2001. Datuk Chong

Kah Kiat, who is the Liberal Democratic Party president and representing the Chinese community, is the sixth leader to assume the post. His term ends on Mar 27.

There have been calls to review and abolish the rotation system claiming that it had affected the development of the State due to the frequent change in leadership.