

I'm free, says Samsudin

PUTRAJAYA: "I'm free" - that was what Tan Sri Samsudin Osman said on the eve of his final day as Chief Secretary to the Government.

"The nation is free from the shackles of colonisation. In my case, I'm free from the duties and responsibilities as Chief Secretary to the Government, in that I no longer carry this burden on my shoulders. This will be passed on to my successor," he said in an interview at his office here on Wednesday.

Samsudin, who was appointed as the No. 1 civil servant in April 2001, reached the mandatory retirement age on March 3 the following year but his service was extended on a contract basis thrice, the last one being a six-month extension.

"I have given my best. Whether or not I have lived up to the people's expectations is up to them to judge. What I have given to this job is my heart and soul," said Samsudin, 59, who leaves the service after 37 years.

Samsudin thanked the Government for giving him the opportunity and trust to hold the highest position in the

civil service.

"But 'Thank You' are two words that don't adequately describe my gratitude to the Government," he said as he packed his files and personal belongings strewn all over the office, before clocking out for the last time.

Dressed in his trademark white collared striped blue shirt with a matching blue tie, he said his gratitude went beyond what he had achieved in his career, noting that he was indebted to the Government for his education.

"The Government took care of my education from Form Four until Form Six when I was at boarding school. It continued until I entered university, on a full government scholarship."

The Johor-born felt that he had somewhat repaid the Government through his long service.

"Although I'm paid a salary, I still feel that giving my heart and soul to the job is part of my effort to repay the Government," said Samsudin.

There's not much glamour to the job. The only thing I know is to work, read a lot and do a lot of other tasks.

Being Chief Secretary to the Government never went to my head."

He spoke of his heavy responsibilities.

"I have to do a lot of chores to fulfil requests by ministers. It's my job to ensure that everything is in order. I also have to look into things like filling government posts.

"It is a very challenging job," he said.

Asked what had been his guiding principles, Samsudin said he strongly believed in giving his best and in being professional in whatever he did.

Samsudin said that during Wednesday's Cabinet meeting, his last time as secretary, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi allowed him to say his parting words and also thanked him for his service on behalf of the Cabinet.

On his post retirement plans, he said he would now devote his time to his job as president of Putrajaya Corp, the local authority for the federal government administrative hub.

"So I'm like the Mayor of Putrajaya," he said in jest. - Bernama



LAST DAY: Samsudin packing his belongings at his office in Putrajaya before clocking out for the last time on Wednesday. — Bernamapic