

Samsudin: I have given my heart and soul

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PUTRAJAYA: "I'm free," was how Tan Sri Samsudin Osman expressed his relief 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," he said in a farewell Merdeka Day interview at his office yesterday.

Samsudin, who was appointed as the nation's 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 people's expectations is up to them to judge. I have given this job my heart and soul.



Samsudin says he is 'free'

"The hours that I spent on the job, thinking, doing... I didn't see beyond my job," said Samsudin, 59, who leaves the civil service after 37 years.

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

last five-and-a-half years.

"But 'thank you' are two words that don't adequately describe my gratitude to the Government," he said in the hour-long interview, which took place while he packed up his belongings in preparation for clocking out for the last time tomorrow.

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. He was also indebted to the Government for his education.

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

The Johor-born civil servant feels that he has 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 were part of my efforts in repaying the Government," he said.

"While being Chief Secretary, to tell you the truth, sometimes I didn't even feel that I was one. It was a job and it just happened that people called me Chief Secretary to the Government.

"Frankly, there's not much glamour to the job.

"The only thing I know is work, that I have to read a lot and do a lot of other tasks."

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

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

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