

# UMS vice-chancellor Prof Taufiq Yap's appointment based on "academic merit"

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**PETALING JAYA:** The Malaysian Academic Movement (Gerak) said Prof Taufiq Yap Yun Hi's appointment as Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) vice-chancellor (VC), which drew flak from local political parties, was not made solely by the education minister.

In a statement, the movement said Yap's appointment was based on the recommendation of the education ministry's independent VC Selection Committee that vetted and interviewed candidates "on the basis of academic merit".

It said scholarship and intellectual leadership as well as vision were the core criteria, the FMT reported.

"We also know that various UMS organisations, including their academic staff association, PSAUMS, are fully sup-

portive of Prof Taufiq's appointment," it said.

Gerak was responding to allegations that Yap was named the vice-chancellor by Education Minister Maszlee Malik without consultation and that he was selected because of his religious leanings.

It said that Yap's religious background should be of little concern. "It is what he will do for UMS as an intellectual leader, and there is certainly much to be done, that should matter to us now."

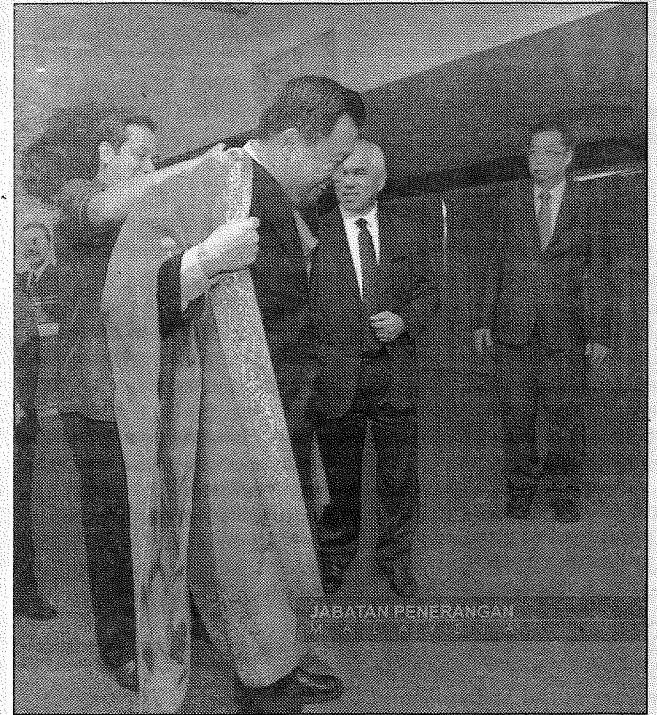
Yap was appointed as UMS vice-chancellor from July 30. The 51-year-old doctorate holder in Heterogeneous Catalysis succeeded Prof Datuk Dr D Kamarudin D Mudin, who served as the VC from June 18, 2017 to July 28 this year – a year short of a three-year term.



Prof Taufiq signing in to report for duty recently.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, who is also the Warisan president, said the education ministry did not consult the state government on the appointment.

Upko vice-president Lucas Umbul also criticised the decision, saying the Pakatan Harapan government was insulting Sabahans as the state government was not



Prof Taufiq being assisted by his predecessor in putting on the VC robe.

consulted.

Gerak said that while recommendations for VCs and other positions from local politicians, like chief ministers, were welcomed, the candidates must meet the high standards set by the VC Selection Committee.

"These political leaders would do less harm by running their states and constituencies than by interfering in the running of our universities," it said.

Taufiq's tenure started on July 30 and will end on July 29, 2022.