

20 DEC 1997

Mahathir-Ghapur

PM HAS NOT ACCEPTED GHAPUR'S RESIGNATION

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he has not decided whether or not to accept the resignation of Datuk Abdul Ghapur Salleh as deputy chief minister, finance minister and deputy chairman of the Sabah Umno liaison committee.

Dr Mahathir said that he met Abdul Ghapur at his office here yesterday and advised him to reconsider his decision to resign from all three posts.

"I have not accepted his resignation. He explained to me...I also explained to him and advised him to reconsider his decision," Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, told reporters after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting at the party headquarters here.

Last Saturday (Dec 13), Abdul Ghapur, 54, announced his resignation as deputy chief minister and finance minister with effect from Thursday (Dec 18). He also resigned from the post of deputy chairman of the Sabah Umno liaison committee with immediate effect.

Abdul Ghapur cited personal problems and his failure to discharge his duties as reasons for his resignation, stating that his decision was final.

When asked regarding Abdul Ghapur's reaction to his advice, Dr Mahathir said he gave indications that he would reconsider his decision.

On whether Abdul Ghapur's resignation had already taken effect, he said that Abdul Ghapur was still deputy chief minister, finance minister and deputy chairman of the Sabah Umno liaison committee.

The Prime Minister said that for as long as he (Dr Mahathir) had not made any official decision on the matter, Abdul Ghapur would remain in the posts.

"He will inform me of his decision soon," he said when asked how much time Abdul Ghapur had requested for to reconsider his decision.

Dr Mahathir said that the Supreme Council did not discuss the matter at its meeting today.

Meanwhile, Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee said that he would act as Finance Minister until a decision was made pertaining to the post.

"For now, he (Abdul Ghapur) is regarded as being on leave and not as having resigned," he said after a meeting between Dr Mahathir and menteri besar and chief ministers here.

He said that he would be acting in that capacity for two weeks.

Asked whether Abdul Ghapur would reconsider his resignation after his meeting with the Prime Minister, Yong said he had not yet met Abdul Ghapur over the matter. -- BERNAMA

HAK RM