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Umno to discuss Ghapur's quitting

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Umno leaders will discuss the resignation of Datuk Abdul Ghapur Salleh from the Sabah Cabinet and from a key State Umno post before deciding on any course of action.

Deputy Prime Minister and Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today any decision such as appointing a replacement would be made after discussions with party leaders, including Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"Abdul Ghapur has cited personal reasons for resigning. We'll have to discuss the actual situation with the party leaders first, including the Prime Minister, before making any decision," Anwar said after opening the first "Sports For All" Carnival (Kesuma) at Dataran Merdeka.

Abdul Ghapur announced his resignation in Tawau yesterday from the posts of Deputy Chief Minister, State Finance Minister - both effective Thursday - and Sabah Umno deputy liaison chairman with immediate effect.

He will, however, remain as Tawau Umno divisional chief until the next divisional election, scheduled for next year.

Abdul Ghapur was appointed to the Sabah Cabinet after the Barisan Nasional took over the State Government in March 1994.

In Kota Kinabalu, Abdul Ghapur reiterated that his decision to resign as Sabah Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister was final and that nothing could change his stand.

Abdul Ghapur, met at his house in Likas here, said it was a matter of principle that he resign as he considered himself as having failed to carry out duties entrusted to him.

"My principle is if I think I have failed in my duties, I quit, and I am sticking to my decision so that someone who is more qualified can be appointed to take over my place," he said.

He declined to elaborate what he meant when he said he had failed in his duties, saying that it was something personal which he could not divulge.

Abdul Ghapur said he would write to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad thanking him for the confidence in him to hold the government and party posts.

On his future plans, Abdul Ghapur said he would be venturing into business.

Meanwhile, Sabah Umno liaison chief Datuk Osu Sukam met Abdul Ghapur this morning to discuss his decision.

In the meeting at Abdul Ghapur's house which lasted about half an hour, Osu said Abdul Ghapur explained to him his reasons for quitting.

"I will convey to the Prime Minister Ghapur's explanation for his decision to quit," he said.

He also said that it was up to the Prime Minister to decide on Abdul Ghapur's replacement in the State Cabinet and as Sabah Umno deputy chief.

In Taiping, Umno Youth leader Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said he respected Abdul Ghapur's decision.

However, he hoped Abdul Ghapur would reconsider. He was speaking after a dialogue session with the Taiping Umno Youth division today.

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