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Barisan leaders express shock

BARISAN Nasional leaders have expressed shock over the sudden resignation of Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar yesterday.

Transport Minister and MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said in Kuala Lumpur: "I don't know what are the details (of his resignation), but I have very great respect for Datuk Seri Abu Hassan who has been with me in the Cabinet for a long time."

He described Abu Hassan as a good and moderate leader and was fair to all races.

Works Minister and MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu also described Abu Hassan as "a close friend of the MIC".

Expressing shock at his resignation, Samy Vellu said, however, Abu Hassan's decision to leave was his own.

"I wish him all the best," he said.

Selangor MIC chief Datuk G. Palanivel also expressed shock.

"The Selangor MIC respects his decision although we are saddened by his move," said Palanivel, who is Deputy Rural Development Minister.

In Kuala Berang, Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein urged party members and the people of Selangor to respect Abu Hassan's decision to step down as Menteri Besar.

"Leaders come and go. So let's respect his decision to resign," he said when approached for reaction.

Hishammuddin, who is Youth and Sports Minister, said he would seek the views of the Youth wing's executive committee at its meeting here later in the day.

As for the choice of Abu Hassan's successor, he said this was the prerogative of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Hishammuddin said he was convinced that the next Menteri Besar would be picked from among those with the ability to continue the State's development.

In Ipoh, Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali expressed shock at the resignation.

"He may have his reasons to resign and we wish him all the best in all his future endeavours," he said.

He added he had known Abu Hassan for many years as they both were elected as Members of Parliament in 1978.

Asked whether political pressure or poison-pen letters could have prompted Abu Hassan to quit, Tajol Rosli said:

"I have not seen any such letters ... Abu Hassan had been in politics for many years and, maybe, he thought that there was no point in serving under pressure and threw in the towel."

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