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Abdullah: PM to decide Moggie's position

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today the Cabinet position of Datuk Amar Leo Moggie, who resigned as Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak president yesterday, was left to the Prime Minister.

"As far as I know he is still a minister," he said.

Abdullah said Moggie, who is Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister, would continue in the position.

"It is not a problem as his appointment is at the prerogative of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad."

Abdullah said Moggie had informed the Prime Minister and him of his intention to resign as PBDS president.

"He has said that this is the best approach and future matters that arise within the party can be handled by his successor," said Abdullah, adding that Moggie had informed them, officially, yesterday.

Asked if he had given a reason for his resignation, Abdullah said that Moggie understood the situation in PBDS better.

Asked if Moggie had wanted to stay on as minister, Abdullah said:

"If he (Moggie) wants to stay on as minister and if the Prime Minister still wants him to continue his services, he can."

Barisan Nasional secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat said the coalition respected and accepted whatever decision made by Moggie.

"It is up to PBDS to decide who should replace Moggie. We abide by their decision to appoint Datuk Seri Daniel Tajem as the new party president."

"What is important is that the party's problems do not affect the strength of the BN. All BN parties must settle their internal problems immediately so we can work on preparations for the next general election," he added.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu described Moggie as a very good and experienced leader who had contributed a lot to the PBDS.

"He was the first president of the party and has been leading PBDS since it was established. I feel sad that he has to let go his position and hope he will continue to serve the party and the BN," said Samy Vellu who is also Works Minister.

MCA vice-president Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said Moggie had contributed tremendously to the local political scene, particularly in Sarawak.

"MCA feels his departure is a loss but we hope his successor will continue Moggie's good work, especially in enhancing ties between Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak," said Fong who is also Human Resources Minister.

Gerakan president and Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said he was confident Moggie had a reason for his actions and expressed the hope that his resignation would not affect the stability and strength of PBDS.