

**No rush to fill DCM vacancy, says Musa**  
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There is 'no rush' to fill the post of deputy chief minister vacated by the resignation of Chong Kah Kiat, said Sabah Chief Minister Musa Aman.

"When the time is ripe, we will think about it," Musa told reporters upon arrival from abroad at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport today.

Musa also said Chong, who was also the state's tourism, culture and environment minister, had a "capable and experienced assistant minister" in the person of Karim Bujang who could carry out the duties of the minister until an acting minister was appointed.

"It (the appointment of Chong's replacement) won't take long. Give me a bit more time," he said in a Bernama report.

Musa was speaking after Chong's shocked resignation yesterday. Both were said to have had long-standing differences.

**Project proposals turned down**

Musa claimed today, however, that he was wrongly reported to have said it was time that Chong step down, saying he said it was "maybe he (Chong) felt that it was time for him to step down".

The final straw that triggered the resignation is said to have been the rejection of Chong's proposal to build a huge statue of the Goddess of Mercy in Kudat as a tourist attraction.

The rejection, said sources, was allegedly accompanied by Chong being told that Umno Sabah, headed by Musa, could ignore him because the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) that Chong heads is a mere 'mosquito party'.

It was the most recent rejection of project proposals by Musa, who is also state finance minister.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday said he did not think Chong's resignation was a loss and the Sabah government would not be weakened by this.

He said Chong did not give any reason for the resignation and he had heard about it from Musa.