

**Deputy minister Ghapur quits
Malaysiakini.com
Mar 27, 2008**

On the eighth day after being appointed deputy minister of natural resources and environment, Ghapur Salleh has called it quits, saying that he wanted to do his "own thing."
MCPX

Just as news of Ghapur stepping down trickled in, speculations on why he did so has begun to mount.

While some say that he could be joining the opposition, others suggested that his resignation could be linked to an internal struggle in Sabah Umno.

Ghapur however rejected these speculations. He said he will remain as the Kalabakan Umno division chief.

It is learnt that Ghapur sent his resignation letter to Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday.

The prime minister has not responded publicly to the resignation. The matter is however expected to be discussed at the Umno supreme council meeting this afternoon as it affects a Umno position in the government.

Three deputy ministers now

Meanwhile, Ghapur was quoted as saying in a local daily that he was not interested in any government post.

abdul ghapur salleh "I just want to do my own thing. I am still a division chief and I do not want people to speculate as my commitment is to Umno and its leadership under Abdullah Ahmad Badawi," he was quoted as saying.

He was also asked why he waited eight days after being appointed to step down. Ghapur replied: "I don't want to be tied up with government duties."

"I'm leaving the matter in the hands of the prime minister," he added.

Ghapur was a former Sabah deputy chief minister who quit the post in 1997 but returned to the state Cabinet several years later.

Ghapur, 64, is the second Sabah MP and Sabah Umno leader to turn down a federal deputy minister's post following the March 8 general election.

Soon after Abdullah named his cabinet on March 18, Kimanis MP Anifah Aman declined to take up the post of deputy transport minister.

Similarly another Umno leader, from Pahang, Tengku Azlan Sultan Abu Bakar, also declined the deputy foreign minister's post. Both of them said that they were senior enough to be made full ministers.

For the sake of his children

According to a Bernama report, Ghapur had submitted his resignation to the prime minister yesterday morning. He said he had also informed Sabah Chief Minister Musa Aman about his resignation.

He also explained his reasons to resign eight days after accepting the post, saying that he did not want to be tied down to the duties of a deputy minister.

"...because I want to concentrate fully on the residents of Kalabakan," he said.

He also said he had many children studying overseas and being a deputy minister would curtail his time to visit his children.

"Initially, I did not want to accept any federal post, including a minister's post, but since I got to know about the appointment from the TV, I did not have the chance to inform about my intention of not accepting any federal post.

"On that announcement, I respected the prime minister's decision and after having taken the oath of office, I forwarded my resignation letter," he said.

Teck Lee: BN must take note

Asked whether Abdullah accepted his resignation, Ghapur said he had explained at length why he resigned and believed that the prime minister would accept it.

"But my decision is final, and I did it in the interest of my family, especially my children who are studying overseas.

"I feel the deputy minister's post carries a huge responsibility and I do not want to be tied down to government regulations where I cannot be actively involved in business and do a lot of other things...so I think it's better for me to be a government supporter instead," he said.

On the Kalabakan people's reaction to his resignation, Ghapur said it was not a problem because "what is important to them is development for the benefit of the people".

On a related matter, former Sabah Chief Minister Yong Teck Lee, under whom Ghapur served as a deputy CM from 1996 -1998, said that the latter must good reasons for quitting his deputy ministerial post.

"His resignation reiterates the growing view even in Kuala Lumpur and among Umno circles that Sabah deserves more recognition and respect from the national leadership and the BN," he said in a statement today.

"I hope this latest resignation will be another wake up call to the national leadership to re-look Sabah and also Sarawak," he added.