

Leaders gone from Cabinet but not from life of politics

Zubaidah Abu Bakar
February 15, 2006
New Straits Times

Feb 14: DATUK SERI ABDUL KADIR SHEIKH FADZIR's departure from the Cabinet does not spell an end to active politics for the outgoing Information Minister.

The veteran politician expects to have his plate full explaining government policy to the people - but without ministerial responsibilities.

Perhaps the most colourful minister in terms of his views and appearance, the lawyer who favours bow-ties intends to seek re-election to the Kulim-Bandar Baru parliament seat at the next general election.

He also wants to go for an Umno supreme council seat, which eluded him in 2004.

"I intend to be more active in politics. I have been holding positions in Umno since 1956 and it is difficult to stop being active in politics," he said.

Kadir, who described his working relationship with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his deputy Datuk Seri Najib Razak as an "extremely happy one", said he would actively rally support for the Government.

"Abdullah's administration is facing different and difficult times and everybody should be helping them. I hope to go around the country to help explain government policies and strengthen the party (Umno)."

Kadir, who resigned as Information Minister yesterday, said his decision to quit the Cabinet had nothing to do with the reshuffle nor pressure after his supreme council ouster.

His reasons lie closer to home and a family he had not seen as often as he wanted to.

"Because of my passion and commitment to the job, I failed miserably in giving reasonable time to my family and my own personal affairs."

His departure comes a full nine months after he broached the subject with Abdullah.

"I arrived at the decision with a very heavy heart and sadness. The Prime Minister, however, suggested I be patient, think again very carefully and continue working."

But the die was cast two weeks ago when he raised the subject again with Abdullah.

"He told me that since I had thought about the matter very carefully, he had to agree. However, he asked me to continue working until such time as he announced a Cabinet reshuffle."

His wife, Datin Seri Suraya Noah, was beside him as the man, best known to his constituents as "Kadiack" (his name in the Kedah dialect), made his exit from the national political theatre.

Kadir said he informed Najib of his decision four days ago and also met

former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday.

Kadir intends to "dabble in the private sector" but will not go back to law.

He hopes his successor will continue with his proposal to turn Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) into a modern and more current broadcasting agency.

Suraya, meanwhile, agreed with her husband's decision to step down. "My children and I, and other family members, are happy that my husband will be able to give us more time.

"Our eight-year-old twins rarely get a chance to be with their father.

"We have no objections to his continued involvement in politics as this will not take too much of his time," she said.

Kadir was first appointed minister in 1999 when he took on the Culture, Arts and Tourism portfolio, a position he held for about five years.

In March 2004, he took over the Information portfolio.

Prior to being appointed a minister, Kadir served as a deputy minister in several ministries, including Foreign Affairs, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs and Human Resources, from 1983.

Born in Baling, Kedah in 1939, he had his primary and secondary education in the State. He was a teacher and a clerk before he joined the Foreign Service in 1963.

He served in the Malaysian High Commission in Pakistan and later in the Malaysian Embassy in Vietnam before returning to Pakistan.

In 1970, he resigned from foreign service to read law at Lincoln's Inn, London.

He was first elected MP for Kulim-Bandar Baru in 1978.

* DATUK SERI ADENAN SATEM, who was dropped from the Cabinet at his request, will see Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud tomorrow on his future.

Adenan, rumoured to be a potential successor to the Chief Minister, said Taib "is, and has always been my leader and mentor".

The former Natural Resources and Environment Minister told reporters this soon after Abdullah announced the Cabinet reshuffle.

Adenan is Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu (PBB) senior vice-president, state assemblyman for Muara Tuang and MP for Batang Sadong.

He said his request to return to Sarawak was because the elections, scheduled for this year, were "coming nearer".

"I indicated my desire to return to Sarawak to the Prime Minister three weeks ago.

"He sympathised with me and during his trip to Kuching (last week), he discussed this with Taib. Both agreed that I should come back.

"I wish to be closer to the ground and the grassroots. I will have to do a lot of travelling after this as Sarawak is such a big State. If the party allows, I will stand in the coming elections."

About the possibility of contesting a higher post, he said: "You can speculate if you want."

Bernama reports that Adenan, born in Kuching in 1944, once worked as a journalist and teacher before continuing his studies in law at the University of Adelaide, Australia. Upon graduation in 1970, he was appointed a magistrate.

His involvement in politics started in 1976 when he was appointed legal adviser and committee member of PBB Sarawak.

In 1979, he contested and won twice, once in the by-election for the Muara Tuang constituency in January and again in the State election several months later in the same constituency.

He continued to defend the seat, winning in every State election.

In the 2004 general election, he contested the Sadong parliamentary seat and beat the Pas candidate. He was then appointed minister.

Although he had proven to be popular among the local community, he lost in the three-cornered fight for the post of PBB deputy president in 1998.

However, he was appointed PBB vice-president, a post he has held since 1987.

* Former Higher Education Minister, DATUK DR SHAFIE SALLEH said he did not want to comment on his departure from the Cabinet:

"I have nothing to say. No comment," said the Kuala Langat MP.

* Former Tourism Minister DATUK LEO MICHAEL TOYAD said he had long expressed his intention to leave the Cabinet.

"I told the PM that I wanted to step down last month for personal reasons."

He declined to comment when asked if his decision was tied to the coming Sarawak state elections.

* Former Deputy Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister DATUK SERI KERK CHOO TING said he would continue to perform his duties as an elected representative, party member and social worker.

"I had indicated to the Prime Minister after the party elections last year that I wanted to tender my resignation. But he told me not to do so at that time."

Kerk is MP for Simpang Renggam, Johor.

Source:

http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/nst/Wednesday/National/20060215012747/Article/index_html