

26 MAR 1996

Osman-meeting

I WASN'T AWARE OF THE MEETING, SAYS OSMAN

ALOR SETAR, March 26 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff said today he was not aware of the meeting by 22 Kedah state assemblymen to sign a memorandum threatening to reject any move to replace him as the Menteri Besar.

He said he knew about the "tahlil" ceremony on Thursday night which he himself had attended at the menteri besar's official residence, Seri Mentaloon, here, but not about the meeting held at the same place later that night.

"I didn't know (about the meeting)," said Osman when asked by reporters after chairing the state's development meeting at Wisma Darul Aman, here.

He declined to comment on the meeting and the action taken by the Umno state assemblymen, who, in the memorandum, reiterated their support for Osman and rejected any move to change the state's leadership.

"What can I say, it involves me. If I were to make any comment...I think it is better that I don't say anything at this time," he added.

Osman also declined to respond to a question on whether he would have advised the assemblymen against holding the meeting and issuing the memorandum if he had known about it earlier.

The action by the assemblymen had drawn criticism from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who said yesterday that it was not consistent with the party's tradition of making decisions after consultations.

Several Umno leaders had also criticised the move, with vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin saying that it would have been proper if the matter was discussed in private with Dr Mahathir.

Umno Youth deputy chief Datuk Nazri Aziz noted that it was the prerogative of the party's president and the prime minister to appoint menteris besar and that all party members must respect and abide by his decision while party secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said the action was uncalled for and could be interpreted as a breach of discipline. --
Bernama

MFJ JK