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Umno-memorandum

KEDAH UMNO ASSEMBLYMEN WANT OSMAN AROFF TO REMAIN AS MB

ALOR SETAR, March 24 (Bernama) -- Twenty two Umno state assemblymen in Kedah have called on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to retain Tan Sri Osman Aroff as the state's Menteri Besar.

They said they would not agree to the Prime Minister appointing Kuah assemblyman Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid or anyone else to the post.

The 22 assemblymen stated their unanimous stand in a memorandum prepared at a meeting here last Thursday. It was presented to Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, the following day.

The memorandum was read out at a news conference here today by the Speaker of the state legislative assembly, Datuk Mohd Zainal Mad Isa.

There have been speculation that Sanusi may be appointed as Menteri Besar ever since the former Agriculture Minister contested for the Kuah seat in last April's general election.

Umno has 26 assemblymen in Kedah.

Among those who signed the memorandum are Zainal Mad Isa (the assemblyman for Kupang), Kedah Umno liaison secretary Datuk Paduka Abdul Rahman Ibrahim (Tanjung Seri), Deputy Speaker Ghazali Ibrahim (Pedu) and Kedah Umno Youth head Ahmad Lebai Sudin (Bukit Lada).

Others include Abdul Rahman Ariffin (Ayer Hitam), Abdullah Hasnan Kamaruddin (Anak Bukit), Syeikh Alias Mustapha (Langgar), Abdul Razak Hashim (Gua Tempedak), Badri Yunus (Tanjung Dawai), Fatimah Ismail (Sungai Tiang), Mohamed Sibi Ahmad (Bayu), Che Pora Omar (Merbau Pulas), Abu Hassan Sarif (Kota Siputeh), Barishah Saad (Tunjang).

Abdul Lateh Mohamed Saman (Kuala Nerang), Ahmad Bashah Mad Hanipah (Alor Merah), Mohamed Jamil Idross (Pengkalan Kundor), Hamlan Din (Belantek), Mohamed Hadzir Jaafar (Jeneri), Jamaluddin Yusuff (Pantai Merdeka), Mohamed Hadzir Ismail (Kuala Ketil) and Muhammad Fishol Said (Bandar Baharu).

Sanusi was invited to the meeting but did not attend as was the case with Padang Matsirat assemblyman Hassan Bulat.

Menteri Besar Osman (Jitra) was also absent while Syed Razak Syed Zain (Kubang Rotan) did not attend as he was abroad on official duty.

The 22 assemblymen said they were not influenced or coerced by anyone into making the decision and did it to safeguard Kedah Umno's image.

Nineteen of them were at today's news conference, while Abdullah Hasnan, Ahmad Lebai Sudin and Abdul Rahman Ariffin did not attend.

Speaker Zainal said the 22 assemblymen had discussed the matter at length before reaching a decision to express their full backing for Osman.

The assemblymen felt Osman had done an excellent job in developing Kedah and it was well placed both politically and economically, he said.

"His moderate nature makes him well accepted and liked by all," he added.

Zainal said the 22 assemblymen hoped Dr Mahathir would consider their decision, and if he still wished for a change in the state leadership, it should be done after the next general election.

Asked what action they would take if Dr Mahathir insisted on a change, Zainal said they would discuss that later if it happened.

Asked why they were not in favour of Sanusi taking over as Menteri Besar, Mohamed Hadzir Jaafar said the former minister did not have the qualities of a good leader, especially when attending state legislative assembly meetings. -- Bernama

MFJ SK RM