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Mahathir-UMNO

MAHATHIR DISAPPOINTED WITH KEDAH ASSEMBLYMEN'S ACTION

By: Syed Jamil Jaafar

AUCKLAND, March 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is disappointed by the action of the 22 Kedah State Assemblymen who sidestepped party channels and instead resorted to publicity to voice their views relating to internal matters.

Dr Mahathir said here today there were channels available to them to forward their views and he was ready to hear whatever they had to say before making any decision.

He was speaking to Malaysian journalists covering his four-day visit to New Zealand who asked him about the action by the 22 State Assemblymen from Umno who signed a memorandum addressed to him last Sunday urging that Tan Sri Osman Aroff to be retained as Kedah Menteri Besar.

The State Assemblymen's action received wide publicity in the newspapers the following day, the day Dr Mahathir left for Wellington for the New Zealand visit.

"Normally, the appointment of a Menteri Besar is the prerogative of the party chief, and I am the party chief," said Dr Mahathir who is Umno president.

"Even so, if someone wants to give his views, they are free to do so... what disappoints me a little is the publicity generated before I even received the memorandum."

He said the matter raised by the Kedah State Assemblymen could actually be referred to the Supreme Council and to him.

"This is a party matter and there is no need for public debate," he added.

Asked if there was any letter or directive to Osman to withdraw as Menteri Besar, Dr Mahathir said possibly the State Assemblymen concerned had heard about it.

"They must have heard... otherwise, they would not have done this," he said

Commenting on the statement by Deputy Prime Minister and Umno Deputy President Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim that the action of the State Assemblymen could not be viewed lightly, he said: "Yes, I do not view it lightly, but there are ways..."

Asked about the possibility of disciplinary action being taken against the State Assemblymen by the party, he said it was difficult for him to comment because there was no specific provision in the party constitution on the matter.

"But in our party we give freedom of expression, only (they should) use the channels," he added. -- BERNAMA

SJ LDB