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Osman-Resign

OSMAN AROFF SUBMITS LETTER TO QUIT AS KEDAH MB

KUALA LUMPUR, May 6 (Bernama) -- Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff has tendered his resignation from the post, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The announcement ended months of speculation regarding Osman's position.

Dr Mahathir told reporters at Parliament House that he had yet to make a decision on Osman's request to step down.

"Until a decision is made (on his position), Tan Sri Osman will continue as Menteri Besar," he said.

Asked whether he accepted the resignation of Osman who has held the post for more than 10 years, he said: "I am thinking (about it)."

To another question on whom he had in mind to be the next Menteri Besar, Dr Mahathir said he had not thought about it.

Questioned further whether former federal minister Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid, who was rumoured to succeed Osman, would be considered for the post, he said: "I'm considering everybody who is qualified."

Sanusi is currently the state assemblyman for Kuah.

Dr Mahathir said he might meet Barisan Nasional assemblymen and Members of Parliament from Kedah to obtain their views before he decided on a new Menteri Besar.

Last March, 22 of the 26 Kedah Umno assemblymen sent a memorandum to Dr Mahathir urging the retention of Osman as the Menteri Besar. They also objected to Sanusi as the successor should Dr Mahathir decide to appoint a new Menteri Baru.

Meanwhile, in Alor Setar, reporters who went to Osman's residence at Lorong Menteri Satu, Jalan Sultanah, to seek his comments failed to meet him.

A policeman at the guardhouse agreed to enter the house to inform Osman about the presence of the reporters but he returned soon after to say the Menteri Besar was "unwell".

"He's not feeling well. He has a headache and has taken medication," the policeman said.

Dr Mahathir, who was asked whether Osman gave any reason for tendering his resignation, said: "Don't know. Maybe he's tired ... physically tired."

Asked when Osman submitted his resignation letter, the Prime Minister said he did not look at the date but added: "He sent (it) a long time ago."

-- BERNAMA

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