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Osman-Sanusi

PM WANTS TO REPLACE ME WITH SANUSI, SAYS OSMAN AROFF

ALOR SETAR, May 8 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Osman Aroff said today the Prime Minister asked him to step down as Kedah Menteri Besar to make way for Kuah assemblyman and former Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid.

"He didn't say anything, merely asked (me) to resign because he wants to replace me with Sanusi," he said when asked by reporters whether Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad mentioned why the change was necessary.

Osman, who was approached by reporters after the State Exco meeting at Wisma Darul Aman, said Dr Mahathir did not mention any reason to replace him with Sanusi.

Speaking to reporters at Parliament House after tabling the Seventh Malaysia Plan on Monday, Dr Mahathir said he had not made a decision regarding the post of Kedah Menteri Besar.

Osman said he had asked the Prime Minister for an explanation but received no response.

"That is why I said I don't know. I asked but he did not answer," he added.

Osman said he was unaware of any other reasons why he needed to resign.

He said the Prime Minister's directive to resign was given before 22 Kedah assemblymen submitted to him a memorandum on March 24 objecting to any move to replace Osman as the Menteri Besar.

Asked whether he had any wish to step down even without being directed to do so by the Prime Minister after several controversial issues surfaced in the state, Osman said: "No ... I did not plan to resign. There was no reason for me to resign.

"If an issue surfaced, that is normal. Sometimes, the fact that there is no issue can be made an issue. The newspaper always raised issues, despite there being no issue.

"A leader has sometimes to face many lies. Allah knows what I have done; whether someone slanders me or not ... that is outside my control."

Asked whether he could now accept the fact that he had to resign after the Prime Minister made the announcement regarding his resignation letter, Osman said: "No ... I am resigning at the request of the Prime Minister."

On reports that some quarters were apparently unhappy over his resignation and tried to stage a demonstration, Osman said he hoped those concerned would not do anything which could cause trouble. -- BERNAMA

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