

10 MAY 1996  
LEAD Mahathir-Sanusi  
SANUSI MEETS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid, mentioned as possible successor to outgoing Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff, today met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the latter's office.

After the meeting, Sanusi told reporters that he would abide by the decision made by the Prime Minister relating to the appointment of Kedah Menteri Besar.

"Like other state assemblymen, I support anyone appointed by the Prime Minister as Kedah Menteri Besar," he said at his residence in Bukit Bandaraya, Bangsar here.

He said, during the meeting lasting about 10 minutes he and the Prime Minister discussed various matters, including the principles of leadership, and his visit to Australia.

But, Dr Mahathir did not say who would succeed Tan Sri Osman and when the appointment would be made, he said.

The former Agriculture Minister said he returned from Australia last night and on reaching home saw a telegram for him, asking him to meet the Prime Minister at 3.45pm today.

He was in joyous mood during the half an hour session with the pressmen who had earlier waited for him at the main gate of the Prime Minister's Department.

Sanusi, now Kuah assemblyman, arrived at the Prime Minister's Department at 3.25pm alone, driving a black Proton Wira bearing the registration plate "Proton 545".

He left the Prime Minister's Department soon after the Prime Minister without talking to the press.

Asked about his name being mentioned by Osman as his potential successor, he said: "I only read it in the newspapers. The PM didn't tell me.

"We discussed the usual stuff. I also briefed the PM on my visit to Australia to meet the investors involved in a tourism project in Pulau Langkawi."

Dr Mahathir, met after the tahlil prayers in conjunction with Umno's 50th anniversary at the National Mosque, confirmed that Sanusi had met him.

Asked whether the appointment of Kedah Menteri Besar was raised at their meeting, he replied: "No, nothing."

Dr Mahathir said it was a usual thing for state assemblymen to meet him.

Sanusi, asked about the Umno situation in Kedah, he said the party was still strong. "I feel discipline is more important in ensuring order within the party and I notice there is a high discipline now among party leaders in the state."

He entertained various questions from the journalists during the meeting, his first since Dr Mahathir announced last Monday that Osman had tendered his resignation letter as Kedah Menteri Besar.

Asked whether he had registered to contest in the party elections in October, Sanusi said: "It's enough that I have become the object of attention for one year, and it's not logical for me to offer myself to contest because it will only prolong the debate about me."

"With the number of those who have registered, it seems that Umno does not lack potential leaders and as such whether I contest or not is

immaterial," he said.

On the memorandum signed by 22 Kedah assemblymen last March, declaring undivided support to Osman as Kedah Menteri Besar, he said: "If I were invited to sign the memorandum, I would still sign it... I don't want to look different than the others."

Asked on his views about recent political developments in particular of Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah returning to Umno, he said it was an important event for Umno.

"Tengku Razaleigh's statement expressing willingness to rejoin Umno is a daring one and that by Dr Mahathir, willing to accept him, is a noble display as both have placed unity above all personal interest," he said.

He said this happened at a time when Umno is celebrating its 50th anniversary and this was a time for Umno members and leaders to recall events of 1946 where there was not other parties then except Umno.

"Parties like PAS and Semangat 46 were all created as splinters of Umno," he said.

On the resignation of Datuk Mohamed Salleh Said Keruak as Sabah Chief Minister upon completing his tenure as promised to allow for the rotation, he said it reflected responsibility on the part of Mohamed Salleh.

"It goes to show that Umno and its leaders fulfil their promises," Sanusi said.

"If we don't fulfil what we have promised, people will no longer trust us and we will lose our credibility," said the Kuah state assemblyman.

"It is especially so when the time comes that the post of Sabah Chief Minister is to be handed over to the leader of a Chinese party and we don't keep to the promise made during the last election, it's just like a Chinese saying `hang the goat's head to sell dog's meat'," he said.

"I don't want to comment on the resignation of the Kedah Menteri Besar as I am a state assemblyman from Kedah," he said.

Asked whether the new Kedah Menteri Besar would get the solid support of the people in the state, Sanusi said: "The wisdom of the Prime Minister should not be questioned, Dr Mahathir's wisdom has been acknowledged by the whole world," he said.

"Asean, Apec, the South-South nations and the world in general recognise Dr Mahathir's statemanship," he said.

"I don't think a small state like Kedah can tarnish Dr Mahathir's credibility," he said. -- BERNAMA

SJA SAA ABG/AO