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Mahathir-MB

TALK OF SANUSI'S APPOINTMENT AS MB MERE RUMOURS, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, March 25 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today clarified that talk of Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid's appointment as the new Kedah Menteri Besar is just a rumour and that Tan Sri Osman Aroff is still the Menteri Besar.

The Prime Minister said he did not know how news on the so-called appointment could spread when Osman is still the Menteri Besar.

"I don't know. Maybe they heard rumours or whatever.

"As can be seen, Tan Sri Osman is still the Menteri Besar," he told reporters after the opening of the new session of Parliament by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar here.

Yesterday, 22 of the 26 state assemblymen in Kedah signed a memorandum to reject any effort to appoint Sanusi as the Kedah Menteri Besar. Sanusi, a former Agriculture Minister, is the Kuah state assemblyman.

The memorandum, said to have been sent to the Prime Minister last Friday, expressed the signatories' stand that Osman should remain as the Menteri Besar.

Dr Mahathir said he had not received the memorandum.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno President, said according to party practice the assemblymen should have met him to discuss the matter because he was always open to suggestions.

"But it doesn't matter, maybe they want some publicity. I am open and if there is anything I am willing to meet anyone," he said when asked for his view on the memorandum.

Last year the Prime Minister met all Kedah elected representatives from the Barisan Nasional regarding the position of the Kedah Menteri Besar at the Prime Minister's Department.

At that meeting, the elected representatives decided to leave it to Dr Mahathir to decide on the matter.

Asked why the issue cropped up again, Dr Mahathir said he did not know the origin of the talk.

He said although the appointment of Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers was the Prime Minister's prerogative, he would still consider the views of the relevant people.

Asked if the memorandum would affect him in making a decision on the matter, he said: "That I don't know. We'll see what it is. I am going to New Zealand, there is some time to think."

Asked if Sanusi would be made Kedah Menteri Besar, he said: "I don't know."

-- Bernama

AH YBY