

19 NOV 1999

Osman

OSMAN'S ABSENCE WILL NOT AFFECT VOTES FOR DR MAHATHIR

By: Abdul Halim Taib

ALOR STAR, Nov 19 (Bernama) -- Many people, especially those in Kubang Pasu, were rather surprised when Tan Sri Osman Aroff was not chosen as a candidate for the Jitra state seat.

Earlier, they were jolted by rumours that Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali would stand in Tunjang, but this did not materialise.

There were also talks that if Osman was not chosen as a state assemblyman, at least he should be given any parliamentary seat outside Kubang Pasu, but both assumptions were proven wrong.

Following his exclusion, there were claims that what was done to the former menteri besar and deputy head of Kubang Pasu Umno division would to a certain extent influence the votes for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who is the member of parliament for Kubang Pasu.

This was in view of the fact that Osman was recently appointed as personal representative of the prime minister who has strong influence in Kubang Pasu.

Osman, who was Jitra assemblyman for the past 30 years, is said to have strong support in Kubang Pasu right to the grassroots level.

However, the rumours were ended when Osman was seen assisting Dr Mahathir to start his campaign in the town of Tunjang this afternoon.

Osman said as deputy head of Kubang Pasu Umno he would continue to give his undivided support and ensure Dr Mahathir won with a big majority in the 10th general election.

He said his personal interest was not important, what was important was to hand Dr Mahathir a handsome victory and at the same time continue to implement the development projects planned.

His speech was responded with loud applause from the crowd who had thought that Osman would not attend the function out of frustration.

Earlier, when met by reporters after the announcement of the BN candidates, Osman said he accepted whatever decision taken by the top leadership.

He said, as a politician he would continue to support whoever was nominated by the BN.

Meanwhile, Osman's successor, Prof Dr Othman Ishak said he would strive to assist Dr Mahathir to win the election.

Dr Othman, 62, was the former Head of the Islamic Academy, University of Malaya and was born in Kampung Natoi, Hosba, in the Kubang Pasu district.

-- BERNAMA

/AO