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PM rules out any leadership change in Kedah, Perlis

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today denied that there would be a leadership change in Kedah and Perlis, saying he had no knowledge of such a thing.

"I would like to deny it because I don't know. A lot of people are making all types of speculation now, especially through the Internet," he said when asked by reporters to comment on speculation that Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid and Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim would be replaced due to poor performance.

He was speaking at a Press conference after a bilateral meeting with visiting Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski at the Prime Minister's Department.

While others accessed the Internet for knowledge and information, Dr Mahathir said Malaysians were using it to spread lies.

"I thought the people would use the Net to express their ideas but now it seems that it is being used to spread lies."

Dr Mahathir expressed regret that Malaysians had the natural tendency to misuse facilities provided to them.

The Prime Minister said he only came to know about Sanusi's purported intention to resign from news on television.

"I have no knowledge at all about the matter. Perhaps, Internet (users) are cleverer than us, that's why they can make false predictions about Sabah (election)."

Sanusi yesterday dismissed rumours about him resigning as Kedah Menteri Besar, labelling them as "Internet lies".

On whether the rumours could have originated following the appointment of former Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff as his personal representative in Kubang Pasu, Dr Mahathir said:

"No, that only involved my constituency ... actually, I have no personal representative. In view of the general election and (since) I am busy, I need an experienced person as my personal representative.

"Osman is in my constituency and I can leave matters to him but he feels a bit constrained because he is not my personal representative although he is my deputy in the division (Kubang Pasu) ... he faces difficulties handling matters related to me."

Dr Mahathir said he did not have to do this earlier as Osman was still the Menteri Besar then.

On talk that Osman was given the position as he was reportedly beginning to "lean" towards the Opposition, the Prime Minister laughingly said:

"Osman Aroff is what we term a die-hard Umno member. Even if he is boiled (rebus) three times over, he will still come out of it an Umno member."

In Kangar, Shahidan challenged those spreading the rumours to come forward and provide evidence of their allegations.

"These lies are not worth our comment," he said when asked by reporters on whether he would resign.

Shahidan was among the few Umno leaders who were rumoured on the Net to have secretly tendered their resignations, a move allegedly made by the Barisan Nasional to weed out unpopular leaders in anticipation of the coming general election.

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