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Sanusi-MB

SANUSI WILL NOT CONTINUE AS KEDAH MENTERI BESAR

ALOR SETAR, Dec 4 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Sanusi Junid announced today that he will no longer become Kedah Menteri Besar to assume responsibility for the poor performance by the Kedah Barisan Nasional in the recently concluded general election.

"I respectfully announce that after looking at the results of the general election on the night of Nov 29, I have decided to decline any offer or to continue to hold the post of Kedah Menteri Besar," he said when reading a three-page statement at his private residence in Jalan Sultanah, here.

Sanusi, who was accompanied by his two children, Azfarnurfaruki, 15, and Akhariayamaziz, 16 and his nephew Azman Mustafa, 31, declined to answer any question.

He said that a day after the results of the general election were announced, he had written a letter to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad saying that he did not intend to continue (as Menteri Besar).

"After discussing in detail with the Prime Minister in Langkawi on Thursday, he (Dr Mahathir) agreed with my intention," he said.

He appeared calm and confident when reading the statement.

Sanusi said that he and the Prime Minister were not influenced by any outside party, either through whispers or any particular newspaper, in making the decision.

"Dr Mahathir's experience in politics since 1946 and my experience in Umno since 1963 as well as 25 years as the people's representative in parliament and the state assembly had become my guidance in making the decision.

"I have brushed aside the views of political enemies from the opposition and political rivals from within the party, which were largely due to personal problems," he said.

In what was described as the worst performance by the Kedah BN, the party only won 24 of the 36 state legislative seats and seven of the 15 parliamentary seats.

Various quarters had pressured Sanusi to step down as they claimed one of the factors (for the losses) was Sanusi, who, according to them, was the source of dissatisfaction among many quarters.

Sanusi said he believed various interpretations, predictions and assumptions would be made by various quarters on the decision.

"Some are sad and some are happy. All these are current sentiments. Our (Dr Mahathir's and Sanusi's) wisdom will be proven through time," he said.

Sanusi added that he made the decision as he did not want to put the Prime Minister in a difficult position.

"If it's Dr Mahathir who makes the announcement, some people may perceive that he was being rejected by the Prime Minister," he said.

As such, he said, he had held a meeting with all BN candidates in the last general election at the Umno headquarters last night to announce his decision.

"I have announced to those who attended that the decision to decline the position as a tactical retreat," he said.

However, Sanusi said the candidates who attended the meeting had rejected his decision.

"They requested that the announcement be held back from the press last

night and to give them time to meet with Dr Mahathir in Langkawi this morning. I consented so that the situation would calm down.

"That's why I did not make the announcement last night," said Sanusi who was appointed Menteri Besar in June 1996 in place of Tan Sri Osman Aroff.

Speaking to reporters last night, Sanusi did not confirm nor deny whether he had received the letter for swearing-in as the Menteri Besar. The swearing-in ceremony is to be held next Saturday.

"I believe the leader of the delegation which met with the Prime Minister this morning had been informed about it. I believe they will accept our decision.

"I hope my friends in the party will not be frustrated with my decision.

"This is the test to see whether we place party interest above personal interest. The Umno struggle is not over yet," he added.

-- BERNAMA

MZM MAI AO