

05 DEC 1999

Mahathir-Perlis

SHAHIDAN KASSIM CONFIRMED AS PERLIS MB, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

JITRA, Dec 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today confirmed that Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim will remain as Perlis Menteri Besar.

"I have given him the letter of appointment," he said.

Speaking at a press conference after attending a Barisan Nasional (BN) thanks-giving feast at the Institut Perguruan Darul Aman (IPDA) here, Dr Mahathir said he needed time to choose a new Menteri Besar for Kedah.

However, the selection would be made as soon as possible.

Yesterday, Tan Seri Sanusi Junid announced that he would not continue as Kedah Menteri Besar.

Asked on the criteria for selecting the Kedah Menteri Besar, Dr Mahathir said the candidate must be a member of the Kedah State Legislative Assembly and all assemblymen were eligible for the post.

To a question whether the candidate for the Menteri Besar must be a religious figure, he said all Umno members were religious.

"I don't see anyone among the Umno members who are not religious," he said.

Asked whether he had a candidate in mind, the Prime Minister said he needed time to think about it.

"We will appoint as soon as possible. But, don't know how soon," he said.

On the intention of the new PAS government in Terengganu to discuss with the federal government to seek an increase in oil royalty, Dr Mahathir said it was their (Terengganu government) right to ask.

"We have to study the request first. Now, there is no federal government because the cabinet has not been formed. I have no right to talk on the matter," he said.

In the PAS manifesto for Terengganu in the 10th general election, it stated that it would seek an additional 15 per cent from the federal government if it (PAS) formed the state government.

The Terengganu government is now given oil royalty of five per cent.

Dr Mahathir also said he still needed Tan Sri Osman Aroff as his personal representative for the Kubang Pasu parliamentary constituency because of the pressure of work in Kuala Lumpur.

"I hope Osman will continue to act as (my) representative here," he said.

Osman, a former menteri besar of Kedah, when met later, said that he initially thought that his function as Dr Mahathir's representative had ended on the conclusion of the general election.

He first carried out the task on Feb 24.

-- BERNAMA

MZM JM AO