

'NOT TRUE'

# PM denies approving request to replace Perak MB

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**PUTRAJAYA:** A claim that the Perak executive council had received the prime minister's nod to replace the state's menteri besar is not true.

In denying the claim, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he was satisfied with Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu's performance and deemed the controversy plaguing the Perak Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu) chairman as something normal for a leader.

"Not true (giving approval for Ahmad Faizal to be replaced). The controversy emerged because there is someone who wants to take over his position," Dr Mahathir said, adding that people would always find everybody controversial.

"In fact even for me, there are those wanting to replace me. That is normal," he said after launching the "Search for the Federal Territories Youth Icon" programme here yesterday.

Perak Umno liaison committee chairman Datuk Saarani Mohamad said a state executive councillor, who had previously met six Barisan Nasional (BN) assemblymen to convince them to join the bid to oust Ahmad Faizal, recently met more BN representatives for the same reason.

The state executive councillor had also claimed the alleged plot had the blessing of Dr Mahathir, who is the chairman of Pakatan Harapan (PH) and Bersatu.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the decision to retain former Umno member Datuk Seri Ronald Kiandee as Public Accounts Committee chairman, a move that some had criticised as going against PH's manifesto.

Dr Mahathir, however, maintained that the decision was in line with the manifesto.

"He (Ronald) was from the opposition (before this). We picked an opposition party. That means



*Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu*

we are true to our manifesto and promise.

"If he chooses to join a government party, what can we do. He was not chosen from the government, he was chosen from the opposition," Dr Mahathir said.

Kiandee, who is Beluran member of parliament, joined Bersatu and received his membership



*Datuk Saarani Mohamad*

card from Dr Mahathir on Friday, together with three other MPs, two senators and two assemblymen from Sabah.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir denied any knowledge of Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Osman Sopian's trip to Batam, Indonesia, while Pasir Gudang grapples with the aftermath of

illegal chemical dumping.

"Did he go? I don't know," Dr Mahathir said.

On Friday, Osman visited Batam to promote the 2020 Visit Johor Year programme.

However, the move did not sit well with Netizens, especially since many in Pasir Gudang, particularly schoolchildren, have become victims of chemical poisoning.

Osman, however, said the visit was work related, which had been scheduled previously.

He said he had handed over his duties temporarily to the state's Health, Agriculture and Environment Committee chairman Dr Sahrudin Jamal, as well as official representatives to monitor the victims' condition.

Asked if he was satisfied with Osman's performance, as the menteri besar has been constantly affected by controversies, Dr Mahathir said Osman had his own views, including on the toxic waste pollution issue.