

Osman Sopian asked to return to palace this evening

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JOHOR BAHRU, April 13 (Bernama) -- Sultan of Johor Sultan Ibrahim Almarhum Sultan Iskandar has asked Datuk Osman Sopian to return to Istana Pasir Pelangi for an audience with him this evening over the issue of his resignation as Johor Menteri Besar.

Osman, who is also Kempas assemblyman, said he had submitted his resignation letter during his audience with Sultan Ibrahim at the same palace this morning, but His Highness did not open the letter.

“I have handed in my resignation letter this morning after a long talk with Tuanku and he took it but did not open to see the contents of the letter.

“His Highness said he was taking it (the resignation letter) as a souvenir,” Osman told reporters at the Kempas assemblyman service centre later.

Osman said he was informed by Sultan Ibrahim that they would meet again at 6.30 pm, but it was unclear what would be discussed at the meeting.

Osman said during the meeting this morning, Sultan Ibrahim had mentioned that he would impose certain conditions pertaining to the appointment of the new Johor Menteri Besar.

“Sultan Ibrahim informed me personally that he will impose these conditions. If the conditions are accepted, there may be a new MB and formation of new state executive council.

“Perhaps, in this regard, there will be major revamp of the state executive council, as was stated by His Highness,” he said.

Osman also said that in the terms of politics, he was still the chairman of Johor Pakatan Harapan, state chairman for Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu) and Bersatu Air Hitam division chief.

He also stressed, as previously announced by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Bersatu president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, both of them did not discuss matters related to the posts with him.

“I am of the view that because I have yet to receive any letter asking for my resignation from these three positions, so I will still hold office.

“Hence, if there is such a decision, I would like to say thank you, to the party as well as to all the people of Johor and the state executive councillors who have given me their support while I was Menteri Besar.

“People gave us the trust in the last general election, N47 Kempas (won) with a good majority. I would like to thank my voters and am keeping in mind that I am still Kempas assemblyman, still four more years for me (to serve). Insya-Allah (God willing) I will serve the people of Kempas to the best of my ability,” he said.

Asked to comment on the main reason behind his resignation as Menteri Besar, Osman said everyone knew about it and there was no need for him to go into details and stressed that no one had forced him to resign.

If he were asked to consider a state executive councillor post later, Osman said he had yet to give it any thought.

Asked further whether the resignation issue would end this evening or to continue, Osman said: “I can’t answer. This is under the purview of His Highness and I leave it to Tuanku,”

He added that he received phone calls from friends including a Cabinet Minister and other menteriis besar expressing sadness and shock over his resignation.

Asked about his position if the Johor Sultan declined to accept his resignation letter this evening, Osman said he could not read the sultan's mind.

"I will look at the situation, but I stand firm (on his decision to quit), I have to toe the party line and so on. We'll just have to wait.

"I don't see any split in the party. The party will keep going as it does not belong to me or certain individuals," he said, adding that during his tenure as Johor Menteri Besar, he had undertaken various efforts including fulfilling the manifesto pledges that were to be done within a 100 days, coming up with a sustainable development plan for the state and preparing the Johor 2019 budget.

Earlier, Osman, travelling in his official vehicle, was seen arriving at the Istana Pasir Pelangi compound at 9.05 am to have an audience with Sultan Ibrahim, He left at 9.55am.

Dr Mahathir had announced the resignation of Osman as Johor Menteri Besar effective Monday (April 8).

Osman, 67, the 16th Menteri Besar of Johor is also believed to be menteri besar with shortest term of service, less than 11 months after taking his oath of office on May 12 last year following the victory of Pakatan Harapan in the 14th General Election.

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