

# Osman holds shortest ever tenure as Johor MB

**JOHOR BARU:** At almost 11 months, Datuk Osman Sapian's tenure as the menteri besar is the shortest ever for a head of the Johor state administration.

But he does not hold the record for being the country's shortest-serving head of a state government.

Nationally, former Upko president Tan Sri Bernard Dompok was Sabah chief minister for nine months when he lost his Moyog seat in the 1999 state elections while Umno's first Sabah chief minister, Tun Sakaran Dandai, held the position for nine months before stepping down on Dec 31, 1994, to become the Sabah Yang di-Pertua Negri.

In Perak, Datuk Seri Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin was appointed as

mentri besar on March 17, 2008, but was unseated after 11 months following a constitutional crisis owing to defections from the then Pakatan Rakyat coalition to Barisan Nasional.

Osman, the 67-year-old state assemblyman for Kempas, was sworn in as the 16th menteri besar of Johor at Istana Bukit Serene on May 12 last year, three days after Pakatan Harapan swept to power in the 14th General Election (GE14).

In GE14, Pakatan won 36 seats in Johor and received the mandate to form the state government. Barisan won 19 seats and PAS, one.

Osman polled 21,137 votes in Kempas and secured a 9,178-vote majority to beat Datuk Ramlee Bohani of Barisan (who received

11,959 votes) and Dzulkipli Suleiman of PAS (2,321 votes).

The Johor Pakatan and Johor Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia chairman had held the Kempas seat under Barisan for three terms, from 1999 to 2013.

Barisan did not field him in the 13th General Election.

Despite helming the state administration for only a short time until his resignation yesterday, Osman was a controversial menteri besar.

Soon after his appointment, he issued a statement saying that the Pakatan government would not provide any allocation to opposition assemblymen in Johor, contrary to Pakatan's stand at the federal level of providing allocations to all elected representatives.

Osman explained later that the state government's intention to not provide the development allocation to the opposition representatives was not a final decision.

Early this year, several news portals in Singapore claimed that Osman had entered the waters of the republic during a visit to the Malaysia-Singapore maritime boundary on Jan 9.

Osman dismissed the allegation. Singapore claimed that Osman had trespassed into its territorial waters and sent a protest note dated Jan 11 to Wisma Putra and sought the postponement of the 14th meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee for Iskandar Malaysia.

Last February, Osman was embroiled in an alleged fake certifi-

cate issue and admitted that he had not completed his studies at the then Agriculture College of Malaya that was eventually upgraded to Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM; now Universiti Putra Malaysia).

Osman explained that he did not know that several websites had stated that he had a degree and a diploma in accounting from UPM.

On March 15, at the height of the Sungai Kim Kim pollution incident, Osman went to Batam for a tourism event.

His predecessor, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, lasted a full term as the menteri besar, from 2013 to 2018.

Another one-term Johor MB was Datuk Abdul Ajib Ahmad, from 1982 to 1986.