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Rozali-PAS

SEMANGAT 46 TO CONTINUE TO SEEK TALKS WITH PAS

KOTA BAHARU, April 30 (Bernama) -- Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46) will continue to seek talks with PAS regarding the Kelantan government's proposal to amend the state constitution to curb the Sultan's powers.

Kelantan S46 chief Datuk Rozali Isohak said today that the party was not giving up hope of resolving the issue through consultation among all parties involved.

"We (S46) are confident that it can be resolved if both parties refrain from making statements that can worsen the situation," he told reporters here.

Rozali, who is Deputy Menteri Besar, said his relationship with Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat remained close although the latter's outburst against S46 had heightened tensions between S46 and PAS over the amendment issue.

He said S46 wanted to maintain cooperation with PAS in the ruling Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah (APU) in Kelantan, which also includes Hamim and Berjasa.

"There is no such thing as the breakup of APU or S46 pulling out of the Kelantan government; that is only speculation. We have not received any directive from the central S46," he said.

Rozali said the state administration was functioning smoothly and the state Exco meeting today proceeded without any problems.

Asked whether S46 would support the proposed amendments, he said the matter would be decided after it was referred to the party's leadership.

"PAS has to discuss it with all APU members to get their support since it is not going alone to the State Legislative Assembly to table the motion and pass it," he said.

Rozali dismissed suggestion that the rift between S46 and PAS had reached a critical stage.

Earlier, Rozali met three state Exco members from S46 -- Kapt (R) Mohd Nor Ahmad (Pulai Chondong), Haji Daud Jaafar (Jelawat) and Nik Mustapa Nik Loding (Gual Periook).

It was understood that they had met to prepare for a meeting with Nik Aziz.

However, their meeting with Nik Aziz was said to have lasted only several minutes because the Menteri Besar had to attend to other matters.

Meanwhile, Kelantan Umno deputy chief Datuk Annuar Musa said the party was adopting an open stand on the constitutional amendment issue.

"We should not rush into the matter because it is APU's family problem," he told reporters at his residence here.

However, the matter would be on the agenda of the state Umno meeting tomorrow.

All Kelantan Umno leaders would be briefed on the issue to enable a consensus to be reached so that Kelantan Umno chief Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad could be informed of the stand, he added.

Meanwhile, the PAS-led Kelantan government today reiterated its stand not to hold a special briefing for the palace regarding the proposed constitutional changes.

"Anyone who has been reading the newspapers should be aware of the amendments. There is no need for further briefing from PAS," the Menteri Besar's Press Secretary Wan Ismail Wan Jusoh said.

PAS was just seeking to adopt federal amendments to define the powers

of the Menteri Besar and the palace, as had been implemented by the other states, he told a press conference here.

However, he said the state government would get the approval of the state Exco, which includes S46 members, before tabling the amendments in the State Legislative Assembly.

He said PAS started viewing S46 negatively after its president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah secretly met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for talks last month.

PAS considered S46 as "a wife who was on the verge of being unfaithful" when Tengku Razaleigh met the Umno leader, he added. -- BERNAMA

RAR YBY