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Muhammad-profile

MUHAMMAD SHARES MIKE TYSON'S FATE

KUALA LUMPUR, April 12 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhammad Taib who resigned as Selangor Menteri Besar may share the same fate with that of the person after whom he was nicknamed, Mike Tyson, the former world boxing champion.

How, Muhammad, 51, got the nickname could not be ascertained but it is clear that both of them "fell" while at the pinnacle of their respective career.

Some people felt that the nickname was given to Muhammad when news of his marriage to Tengku Puteri Zahariah, daughter of the Sultan of Selangor, or better known as "Ku Yah" in July 1987 were widely talked about.

The tale became a sensation when the Sultan of Selangor became angry about the marriage as he was then not informed about it.

Nevertheless, Muhammad who was appointed Selangor Menteri Besar on August 14 1986, emerged as one of the most popular Umno leaders.

His resignation, which was announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today, takes place a day after the Magistrate's Court in Brisbane, Australia, announced that Muhammad would face another charge, that is making a false declaration pertaining to his case of attempting to take undeclared currency equivalent to A\$1.2 million (RM2.4 million) out of Australia.

Muhammad's downfall began on December 22 last year -- only one month after he was reelected as Umno Vice President -- when he was detained at the Brisbane international airport for the money.

The nation was also shocked by a report in the Brisbane Courier Mail claiming that Muhammad and his wife Puan Sri Asbi Rohani Asnan owned property in Australia including a 4,500-hectare sheep farm and other properties worth millions of ringgit.

The Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) had already started investigations on Muhammad. Besides questioning Muhammad recently, the ACA had also sent four officers to Australia for further investigations.

Earlier, Muhammad had also caused controversy following his marriage to Ku Yah. They were blessed with a son, Megat Faez, before the marriage ended after four years in 1991.

He became a member of the Umno Supreme Council for the first time in 1987 and was elected as party Vice President in 1993.

Muhammad joined UMNO in 1964 at the age of 19. After six years, he was appointed Ulu Bernam Umno Youth Head and later Hulu Selangor Youth Head before becoming leader of Hulu Selangor Umno division.

Earlier, he was once appointed special officer to the then Deputy Education Minister Datuk Suhaimi Kamaruddin and resigned as Assistant Director (Planning Division) of the Education Ministry in 1982 to stand for election as the Barisan Nasional candidate for the Batang Kali state constituency.

He received his early education at Sekolah Rendah Batang Kali, where his father was a teacher, before entering a teachers' college.

After completing his teacher training, he served as a teacher in a school in Tanjung Malim where he met Asbi Rohani Asnan whom he married several years later. The couple have three daughters and a son.

Muhammad later pursued higher education at the Universiti Malaya and obtained a Bachelors Degree with first class honours in Malay and Islamic Studies in 1979. -- BERNAMA

NHD AO