

13 DEC 1999

Mahathir-Tsu Koon

TSU KOON MEETS PM BUT KEEPS MUM ON NEW EXCO LINE-UP

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 13 (Bernama) -- Pulau Pinang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here today to resolve problems over the formation of the new state government.

Two weeks after the general election, Pulau Pinang remained the only state yet to announce its state executive council line-up, arising from differences between Gerakan, which leads the state government, and MCA.

But Dr Koh emerged from the one-hour meeting with the prime minister without saying if the issue had been resolved.

" I will make the announcement at the right time," he told Bernama before getting into his car after the meeting.

Dr Mahathir had told reporters yesterday that the "crisis" would be resolved soon.

" Be patient, we will solve the issue soon," Dr Mahathir had said.

Reporters approached him yesterday on the formation of the state government following reports of a possible pull-out from the state administration by the MCA which had requested for a deputy chief minister's post and an executive council seat instead of just two council seats as in the past.

After today's meeting with the prime minister, Dr Koh said he would have to refer to many people, including the Gerakan leadership, before a decision on the matter could be made.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liok Sik told reporters in Pulau Pinang yesterday that the party's relationship with Gerakan was strained.

Dr Ling had met state MCA leaders who expressed " disappointment and unhappiness over events since the general election".

When asked about the outcome of his meeting with Dr Mahathir today, Dr Koh only said: "No comment, no comment."

Meanwhile in KUALA LUMPUR today, Ling said the MCA would offer a solution to the Pulau Pinang state leadership issue in a few days but declined to elaborate.

"We've reached a consensus in offering the solution and will present it to the BN in a day or two," Ling told a press conference after chairing an MCA presidential council meeting at party headquarters at noon.

Despite reporters persistently trying get him to divulge more on the party's solution to the issue, Ling remained evasive and only announced the appointment of four new council members.

They are the MCA legal bureau chief Leong Tang Chong, MCA Youth secretary Yew Teong Look, Member of Parliament for Petaling Jaya Utara Chew Mei Fun and the MP for Padang Serai Christine Lim Bee Kau.

In PULAU PINANG, state Umno liaison committee secretary Datuk Azhar Ibrahim said that the Pulau Pinang Umno was leaving it to the BN top leadership to deal with problem.

He said Umno hoped that the matter would be overcome amicably so as not to adversely affect the unity of the party in the state.

Azhar, who was a state executive councillor, said that normally the state executive councillors would be sworn in before the swearing-in of all the state assemblymen.

The swearing-in of the state assemblymen is scheduled to be held on Saturday and the state legislative council is scheduled to sit on Monday.

-- BERNAMA

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