

S'gor wants power to pick its top officers
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The continuing row over the appointment of former Selangor Islamic Department (Jais) head Mohd Khusrin Munawi as state secretary has moved Selangor to push for its right to appoint the state's Superscale or Jusa A officers.

In this respect, Selangor will take steps to amend the state constitution to empower its public service commission to appoint civil servants to superscale posts, including that of state secretary, senior state exco Teresa Kok said.

Kok (right) revealed details of the motion, which will be tabled in a special sitting of the state assembly on Jan 24, at a forum held at the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH) last night.

She said the state would amend Article 52(1) of the state constitution to stipulate that the three key posts of state secretary, state financial officer and state legal adviser be filled by the Selangor public service commission.

The state government would also table another motion to enhance the state public service commission, to enable it to select and promote senior state civil servants, as stipulated under Article 97(1).

Currently, the state commission's authority is only limited to civil servants in Special Grade or Jusa B, while the federal service commission exercises the power to appoint the top state posts.

Confusion over 'relevant' service commission

Article 52(1), which is the key to the controversy, states that appointments to the three key posts in the state will be made by the "relevant public service commission".

The confusion - which gave rise to the ongoing row - is whether "relevant public service commission" refers to the federal or the state commission.

"The state will change the term 'relevant public service commission' to 'state public service commission'," Kok said.

The amendment would restore the Selangor constitution to the time before the 1993 amendments made by then Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad to curb the powers of the Malay rulers.

The amendment would effectively give the Selangor public service commission the power to select or promote civil servants for Jusa A posts, she added.

The Pakatan government is likely to face fierce resistance from the BN in moving the amendment, as the opposition in Selangor has already declared its rejection of the proposals.

The ruling coalition is three short of the two-thirds majority required to amend the state constitution.

Despite this, the state government still determined to table the bill.

"Since the appointment of Khusrin (above, left) by the BN-controlled federal government is a political move, our amendment of constitution is also a political action to counter them," Kok said.

"Even if the amendment is not passed, our move will still be recorded in history."

She said Umno was also in a dilemma now, as its assemblypersons in Selangor were still unsure whether they should attend the assembly session.

"The session is to restore the power of the sultan. If they do not attend, it will treason on their part," Kok added.

Others who spoke at the forum last night were Political Studies for Change (KPRU) researcher Ong Ooi Heng, lawyer Leong Cheok Keng and academician Wong Chin Huat.

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