

BN to attend S'gor assembly sitting
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The Selangor opposition will attend the emergency state assembly sitting this Monday, but will not support the proposed amendments to the state constitution scheduled to be tabled by the state government.

Selangor Umno deputy chief Noh Omar said they will not support the amendments, which he said are unnecessary and a "waste of time and public funds".

Contrary to Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim's contention that the amendments would return power of state appointments to the Sultan, Noh said the changes would instead reduce the Sultan's powers while elevating the powers of the menteri besar.

"The amendments would empower the menteri besar... It would be like the MB sharing powers with the Sultan," Noh said at a press conference at the Umno Selangor headquarters in Shah Alam today.

"To say that they want to return power to the Sultan is just to blur the eyes of the rakyat. Instead, what they are doing will reduce the powers of the Sultan," he said.

Two-thirds rule

The Selangor government is attempting to amend the state constitution to provide the Sultan and the menteri besar the final say in the appointment of ex-officio positions such as that of the state secretary.

Currently, the federal government is exercising powers to such appointments.

The state government argues that the BN-ruled federal government has exploited this opportunity to appoint Mohamed Khusrin Munawir, whom the state government cannot get along with, as the state secretary.

Pakatan is three seats short of fulfilling the two-thirds requirement to successfully pass the Enactment. Constitutional amendments cannot be passed without consent of two-thirds of the members of the state legislative assembly.

In an attempt to convince the opposition to support the move, Khalid had previously said that missing the sitting was tantamount to derhaka (treasonous).

'No reason for amendments'

Noh scoffed at Khalid's warning, pointing out that the only reason why the state government was pushing for the amendments was because the menteri besar cannot accept Khusrin's appointment.

"They are pushing for the amendments because the menteri besar feels he has no power in the appointment of the state secretary. It is not because they want to give power to the Sultan, but rather the menteri besar wants more power.

"If the menteri besar cannot accept (Khusrin's) appointment and the Sultan gave his consent, what does that mean? It means the menteri besar is committing treason against the Sultan," Noh said.

He also took the state assembly secretary to task for not providing the opposition the proposed amendments ahead of the emergency sitting, despite requests from acting opposition chief Satim Diman.

Noh said this shows a lack of transparency by the state government and accused them of planning to "ambush" the opposition during the debate.

Fiery debate expected

Nevertheless, Noh assured the press that not only will all opposition members attend the sitting, as many as possible will debate the matter to state their objections.

Meanwhile, government backbenchers were prepped for the sitting during a special briefing last night.

Chief whip and Bukit Antarabangsa state assemblyperson Azmin Ali said that the backbenchers were briefed on the purpose of the amendments and procedural matters.

"It was a normal exercise... where the menteri besar and the speaker (Teng Chang Khim) explained the whole procedures of the sitting. We now have a few days to prepare our debates," he said when contacted.