

Selangor back to square one on Khusrin
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The field of options has narrowed for the Selangor government, as it continues to grapple with the contentious appointment of former Selangor Islamic Affairs Department (Jais) director Mohd Khusrin Munawi as state secretary.

The Pakatan government yesterday failed in its bid to change the state constitution and restore powers of appointment of its top three civil servants to the Sultan of Selangor, leading them back to where they started in dealing with Khusrin's appointment.

Having already met a dead end at the state assembly, it leaves at least two obvious choices to Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim and his administration - either they continue to keep Khusrin outside, or open the door and let him in.

Khalid, ever the pragmatic technocrat, has already indicated that he is not entirely opposed to having Khusrin serve as the state's top government officer, having said that he believes the latter is a "professional man" and "will do his best".

The pressure however falls on Khalid to find a solution to the month-long impasse, which started after the federal government made a move to install Khusrin as the new state secretary without actually consulting the menteri besar, as is the convention.

State sec post key to the administration

Should the state government decide to keep Khusrin from taking the oath of secrecy, which is the final pre-requisite before he can officially assume his post, it would be problematic as the state secretary is central to the running of the government itself.

Possibly more difficult however is if Khalid feels that they don't have much choice but to accept Khusrin's appointment, which would mean he will have to convince both his executive council and state Pakatan leaders to see things his way after a month's worth of opposition to the move.

While the state government had indicated that it will hold off making a decision on Khusrin until after yesterday's state assembly sitting, a source close to Khalid noted that it is unlikely that a decision will be made anytime soon.

"The menteri besar still has to meet with exco members and state (Pakatan) leaders to discuss the matter of Khusrin's status. Whatever the decision, I'm quite sure it won't be made this week," the source said.

The state exco meets every Wednesday, and the oath of secrecy can only be taken before the council.