

Malik new chief of Penang Islamic Affairs Council?

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It has been reliably learnt that the Agong has decided to appoint PKR state executive councillor Abdul Malik Abdul Kassim as the new president of the Penang Islamic Affairs Council (MAIPP).

According to a highly-placed source, Malik (right) had received information on his new appointment on Wednesday.

This little piece of news, according to the source, will create waves in Pakatan Rakyat as PAS has been hopeful that the post would go to its representative since the coalition took over the state leadership in 2008.

PAS, which has only one representative in the Penang legislative assembly, has been trying to secure the position, left vacant since Jan 1.

However in 2008, the Agong appointed Elias Zakaria, a former USM lecturer, as MAIPP president. He has since decided not to seek reappointment.

When asked to confirm and clarify the information, Malik did not deny but merely said "no comments for now".

PAS is expected to be upset over the latest development and all efforts are now under way to secure another appointment for the Permatang Pasir PAS assemblyperson Salleh Man (left).

Salleh may probably be offered the chairmanship of Pusat Urus Zakat, which is wholly-owned by MAIPP to collect and manage the tithes given by Muslims.

However, it is also learnt that Penang Deputy Chief Minister Mansor Othman has been eyeing the position too.

No choice but to accept the decision

When asked, Salleh said he has yet to receive any information regarding the matter. However, if the appointment is confirmed, then "I have no choice but to accept the decision," he said.

When asked if the latest development would cause friction between PAS and PKR, Salleh replied: "What to do? We can't do a thing about this. It is the Tuanku's decision, we cannot go against it."

Earlier this month, Malaysiakini reported that a controversy was silently brewing in Penang over the MAIPP appointment.

Malik, who is also state PKR vice-chief, had then said that the name of the new president had been submitted to the Agong for his decision.

Speculation was rife that Malik's name had also been submitted to the Agong, much to the chagrin of Umno members.

But Mansor, who is also state PKR chief, told the media that Salleh is being recommended for the much sought after post.

Umno has been taunting PAS for defending the DAP in Penang, saying the state government has marginalised the party and does not appreciate its support as PAS had failed to secure the post.

Umno Youth chief Shaik Hussein Mydin said he supports Salleh and not Malik as MAIPP chief as “the council has been plagued with several problems under the state exco”.

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