

## **PAS stands to lose out if Kedah crisis not resolved**

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If the cracks in PAS administration in Kedah are not patched up soon, it could result in far reaching consequences for the party, said vice-president Mahfuz Omar.

"I would be too shallow if I say that it does not affect PAS or Pakatan Rakyat, but I don't see it as a problem that cannot be resolved.

"(If it goes on unresolved) it will stagnate both, PAS' and Pakatan's election machinery until every level down the garpevine will lose their focus," Mahfuz (right) told Malaysiakini.

"Instead, the concentration on the 13th general election, which is speculated to be just around the corner, will be too focused on this matter," he noted.

The Kedah PAS government has been in the unwelcome spotlight in recent months with the friction among Menteri Besar Azizan Abdul Razak and executive councillors Phahrolrazi Zawawi (Pengkalan Kundor) and Ismail Salleh (Alor Mengkudu).

Phahrolrazi was the exco member for housing, local government, works, utilities and energy while Ismail's portfolio was health, non-governmental organisations, human capital development, science and innovation, and information and communications technology.

Phahrolrazi Mohd Zawawi Phahrolrazi (left) and Ismail, who are also state PAS deputy commissioners I and II, respectively, had rejected reappointment to their exco posts after having hit a wall with Azizan over state administration matters.

Azizan had then reinstated eight exco members to their posts and said that he will deal with the reappointment of the two later - either by appointing new faces to the vacant posts or transferring their portfolios to the other excos.

Although the three parties have constantly downplayed the gravity of their disagreements, the PAS central committee had to step in to assuage the tension by appointing vice-president Salahuddin Ayub to as an intermediary to resolve the situation.

Need for tact in managing people

After a three-hour meeting yesterday, the central committee announced that a special meeting between Azizan and Phahrolrazi will be held in Alor Setar at 9pm tomorrow.

Although, the Pokok Sena parliamentarian said that he has no first-hand information on the gravity of the issues faced by the trio, he defended Azizan, saying that the latter had not objected to the reappointment of Phahrolrazi and Ismail.

"As far as I know, that was also the wish of the menteri besar but because the two of them had withdrawn, it became complicated for the menteri besar to suggest all 10 names, including theirs," said Mahfuz.

"What if their names are submitted to the sultan and on the day of oath-taking they don't show-up? It would ruin the event," he added.

"I hope the meeting would resolve the problem once all the three parties express their discontent openly," said Mahfuz.

Mahfuz also denied that the excos were vexed over Azizan's hardline stand on the five students suspended from state-owned Kolej Universiti Insaniah (Kuin) last year for protesting against the use of the institution's religious teaching block to house a smart school.

The debacle had resulted in a clash between Azizan and his Pakatan colleagues, raising doubts over the opposition coalition's commitment to academic freedom as promised in their election manifesto, Buku Jingga.

Asked whether it has been tough for the PAS to reign in the menteri besar who has refused to withdraw the students' suspension, Mahfuz said: "When managing certain people, we need to be tactful... we have to understand their behaviour, their personality and how they communicate with others.

"If people learn how to be tactful there wouldn't be a problem. Some people shouldn't be provoked and when provoked they react differently - which may seem like they are difficult to be disciplined - because the person will defend whatever he did as right."

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