

Revealed - RM600mil cause of Kedah PAS crisis
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EXCLUSIVE The crisis in Kedah PAS erupted after Menteri Besar Azizan Abdul Razak's alleged insistence on awarding RM600 million a mega-project to an Umno-linked company.

This was confirmed by Phahrolrazi Mohd Nawawi, one of the two PAS state assembly persons who had initially refused their reappointment as exco members.

Malaysiakini had asked Phahrolrazi (left) yesterday to confirm or deny speculation that he had refused the reappointment because Azizan had pressured him into endorsing the project.

"Yes. It was something to that effect," was Phahrolrazi's reply.

Sources close to the Kedah government had earlier told Malaysiakini that Phahrolrazi and Ismail Salleh had both refused their reappointments due to disagreements with Azizan.

But the straw that broke the camel's back, according to the sources, was when the duo were allegedly pressured into endorsing the RM600 million road project to a company linked to a former Kedah Umno division leader.

Phahrolrazi would not disclose the details of the project other than to say it is a joint venture between the company and a government-linked company (GLC). He also put the price tag at "several million ringgit".

"I did not agree to it. We usually make a collective decision at the state exco meeting but Azizan often wants to override it," he alleged.

Asked if an open tender had been called for the project, Phahrolrazi said this did not apply to the GLC concerned, but said the contract has yet to be awarded.

"We managed to stall it. I believe we can resolve this issue as we have not awarded the contract yet," he said.

Phahrolrazi made these remarks when approached after a press conference at his home yesterday, during which he announced his decision to accept the exco reappointment.

This followed a peace deal brokered over the weekend, involving moderation by the PAS top brass. The deal involved the formation of a steering committee that will monitor PAS' exco members in Kedah.

'Many differences of opinion'

Phahrolrazi admitted that he has never been close to Azizan to start with, also saying that he and Ismail had many differences of opinion with the MB. The road project was one example of this.

But now that the steering committee is in place, Phahrolrazi said he is relieved because Azizan's (left) actions will be subjected to greater scrutiny and he may drop his infallible attitude.

"The menteri besar will no longer be able to override decision and he will no longer be able to say that outsiders cannot intervene in the running of the state," he said.

Phahrolrazi claimed that PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar had resigned as chairperson of Syarikat Kedah Sato Sdn Bhd, another Kedah government-owned company, in 2010.

He alleged that this too was because Azizan had intervened in the management of the company.

At the time of writing, Malaysiakini was unable to obtain a response from Azizan or his office.

His aide said Azizan wants to rest and will not issue any statement soon.

Contacted again today, Phahrolrazi said Azizan was in hospital because he was feeling ill.

He added that neither he nor Ismail have received any documentation confirming their reappointment as exco members.

The Kedah PAS crisis began last week, with Phahrolrazi and Salleh making it clear they would abstain from taking their oath as exco members. This was interpreted as a vote of no-confidence against Azizan.

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