

## **'Like father like son', Kedah PAS says of Mukhriz**

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Kedah PAS is unmoved over the recent threat by Menteri Besar Mukhriz Mahathir to expose "questionable project files" found under the previous Pakatan Rakyat government if the coalition continue to undermine the good reputation of his administration.

Pakatan ruled Kedah, dubbed the 'rice bowl of Malaysia', for a term, from March 8, 2008 to May 5, last year, under the late menteri besar Azizan Abdul Razak.

"Please do it. If there are problems, corruption, don't cover it up," said state PAS commissioner Mahfuz Omar (left) at a ceramah in Alor Setar last night attended by about 2,000 people, mostly from the padi farming community.

Opposition leader and PKR supremo Anwar Ibrahim also attended the ceramah, accompanied by MPs Gooi Hsiao Leung (Alor Setar) and Johari Abdul (Sungai Petani), as well as rice farmers from BelaTani and Badan Bertindak Pesawah Padi Malaysia.

"The MB's attitude will destroy Kedah because he issues threats when he is being challenged or questioned. This is dangerous," the Pokok Sena MP quipped.

Mahfuz alleged that Mukhriz's style of managing critics is no different from his father, former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was in office for 22 years until he resigned in October 2003.

He claims that just like his father, Mukhriz will hold his state executive councillors to ransom by keeping secret files on their misdeeds, so that he can use them to control his subordinates.

"So that no one will challenge him, all the state exco members will obey him because if they challenge him, he will expose their files," said Mahfuz.

"This means that those under him can be involved in corruption as long as they do not question him," Mahfuz added.

Mahfuz then said Pakatan's approach was different, as the coalition will continue to expose cases of corruption in BN despite the threats from Mukhriz.

"We are confident that the previous government under us was clean, did not abuse its powers to seize the people's rights," Mahfuz said.

"So don't hide anything, please expose everything. We have faith that our leaders are clean," he added.

"We are not interested in people's personal affairs but we will expose any kind of corruption, if any, in the present government," he stressed.

'Time to consider opening old files'

Mahfuz was responding to Mukhriz's comment in Utusan Malaysia on Jan 31, where he was quoted as saying that he will not hesitate to disclose problematic files under the previous PAS government.

He cited files related to a logging project in Tasik Pedu and the building of Kedah's state-funded Kolej Universiti Insaniah (Kuin), which was then often highlighted in the media for its poor management, staff and students' unhappiness.

"It is time to consider opening these old files on Pedu and Kuin, a lot has happened under Kedah PAS' administration. I thought we do not have to talk about the past," he said in the Malay daily.

"But if they want to show that they are clean and we are dirty, we can easily show proof that for the past five years, there were many incidents of misappropriation (penyelewengan)," Mukhriz had claimed.

Mukhriz made the remarks after being questioned by state opposition leader Amiruddin Hamzah, who lodged reports in the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and Bursa Saham over the state's decision to settle a breach of contract suit for RM2.5 million involving Bina Darul Aman Berhad (BDB)

Amiruddin (right) had said that the state had a good chance of winning the five year old case questioning why Mukhriz had decided instead to settle it out of court with such a huge sum of money.

The Kedah government holds the largest share in BDB, which is currently chaired by Mukhriz, who took over the MB seat from PAS last year, added the former state executive councillor.

In 2009, BDB sued a logging concessionaire for breach of contract after the latter

asked for an extension of time to log the forest where the 74.5 km TEKIH (Trans-Eastern Kedah Interland Highway) being built from Durian Burung to Kupang.

The PAS government had cancelled the contract when it took over Kedah in 2008 as BDB's core activities do not include logging.

Mukhriz had justified the move, saying that the settlement was meant to speed up the court proceedings, and that the amount paid was "appropriate and effective", adding that Kedah had more to lose if the matter had been prolonged in court.

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