

PM: Mukhriz had easy route to MB-ship

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Mukhriz Mahathir did not face any obstacles in being appointed menteri besar, unlike his predecessors, said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Speaking at the Alot Setar Umno division delegates meeting today, Najib said that unlike before, no one had questioned his prerogative in the appointment.

He said the decision was made even before the 2013 general election.

"The then state Umno head Ahmad Basha Md Hanipah did not get angry or felt slighted by my decision, because I (as Umno president) had the prerogative (on the appointment.

"In the past, state Umno leaders were asked to meet the prime minister one-by-one to state whether they agree (with the president's decision).

"Ahmad Basha merely said: 'It is okay, but if you have anything else, please give me. Don't forget me'," said Najib, which elicited laughter from the 1,000 people present.

Mukhriz and Ahmad Basha was among those in attendance.

Be loyal

Najib said Kedah Umno's cohesion had led to the recapture of the state from PAS.

He added that the victory was also due to the loyalty and obedience shown to the party president.

"We must defend the party and its leader. Ahmad Basha let Mukhriz become menteri besar in a peaceful manner," said Najib.

Earlier, Ahmad Basha gave a two-hour speech, which broached on the topic of appointment of former Kedah menteri besar Sanusi Junid by then premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is Mukhriz' father.

According to Ahmad Basha, Mahathir met Kedah state Umno leaders first to discuss Sanusi's appointment.

"We were all asked to meet him one-by-one but I politely told Mahathir that I did not agree to Sanusi's appointment.

"Instead, I told Mahathir that I supported the state Umno chief Osman Maarof to continue being menteri besar.

"That is because I supported my leader. We have to support our party leaders," he added.

Observe the limit

Najib was in Perlis and Kedah today to officiate several divisional delegates meetings.

As in similar events elsewhere in the country, Najib had implored Umno grassroots to avoid questioning the party president over some decisions, including political funding.

Najib said that he may appear "soft", but there were "limits" - hinting that he would not hesitate to take action against those who question him.

The premier had come under heavy public scrutiny after the Wall Street Journal published an article claiming that Malaysian investigators had traced nearly US\$700 million in his private accounts.

Following this, Najib dropped Muhyiddin Yassin and Shafie Apdal from cabinet over their criticisms of how his administration was handling the 1MDB issue.

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