

Mystery at Jalan Bellamy

Malaysiakini

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MalaysiaKini Team

There was an unusual gathering among top federal government figures last night in Kuala Lumpur ahead of an expected showdown between Umno and Perikatan Nasional next week.

The gathering took place at a mansion along Jalan Bellamy - a quiet and lush part of Kuala Lumpur dotted with many government-owned properties and near the former Istana Negara.

Dozens of luxury cars - many of them Toyota Vellfires, a favourite of the political elite - were spotted within the vicinity of the property.

Two official vehicles used by deputy ministers were also spotted.

Malaysiakini identified that at least one deputy minister, one cabinet minister and one MP who is also a GLC head were at the scene.

All three are believed to be Umno MPs who are in opposition to Umno president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Media presence in the area was not welcomed. Eventually, a police outrider told the Malaysiakini journalist who was observing on a public road to leave.

This gathering is believed to be a response to intense speculation that Zahid was planning to officially withdraw Umno's support from Perikatan Nasional next week.

Numbers game

Zahid has been empowered to do so by the Umno national delegates assembly - the party's highest decision-making body - in March.

Multiple sources told Malaysiakini that Zahid has secured majority support from the party's executive body - the supreme council - and was now working on securing written commitments from the party's MPs.

The pretext for withdrawing support was PN's non-compliance with Umno's 14-day ultimatum - which expires on Monday - for the federal government to heed the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's decree to reconvene Parliament "as soon as

possible".

Umno currently has 38 MPs. Only two - Ahmad Jazlan Yaakub (Machang) and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (Gua Musang) - are no longer supporting Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin.

That means that on paper, Muhyiddin enjoys the support of 113 MPs. Since two seats in the Dewan Rakyat are vacant, he only needs 111 votes to conduct business when Parliament reconvenes later this month.

Sources indicate that around two dozen Umno MPs - including cabinet ministers and deputies - were at the meeting at Jalan Bellamy last night.

That leaves around a dozen who are prepared to toe the party line, should Zahid give the order.

Who are their leaders?

While the identities of the rebel Umno MPs are not entirely clear, recent events have indicated that two Umno figures have assumed some unofficial leadership roles.

On June 23, Padang Rengas MP Nazri Abdul Aziz claimed that the Sembrong MP Hishammuddin Hussein had been endorsed by 25 BN MPs as their representative for an audience with the Agong.

This figure would mean at least 21 Umno MPs had endorsed Hishammuddin - the BN treasurer - as their representative, thereby side-stepping Zahid, who is the BN chairperson.

Hishammuddin has not denied representing the 25.

Another unofficial voice against Zahid had come from Umno vice-president Ismail Sabri Yaakob, who, on June 22, attempted to distance the party supreme council from the 14-day ultimatum.

A day later, Ismail Sabri was attributed to a statement claiming that "all BN MPs" would not back a no-confidence vote against Muhyiddin.

His team later retracted the statement. A new statement was issued with nearly identical content but was attributed to "all BN MPs" instead.

Hishammuddin and Ismail Sabri are two of seven Umno cabinet members. None of the seven cabinet members is believed to be aligned to Zahid.

Moreover, it is believed that the Jalan Bellamy mansion where the gathering took place is government-owned and accessible to a specific cabinet minister.

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