

The Selangor migraine for Umno
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As the Umno's campaign to "Save Selangor" switches into top gear from the halfway point of its first phase, party personality and state opposition leader Dr Mohamed Khir Toyo is still very much in the shadows.

However, he insisted that there is nothing sinister about it, just that he is "busy".

"Of course the organisers invited me. But I just had to turn them down. I am very busy with my activities in my constituency and the ('Save Selangor') functions usually end very late.

"If I'm free I'll go lah," said the Sungai Panjang assemblyperson.

He also waved off speculation of bad blood between him and the state's deputy liaison committee chief Noh Omar, saying this was simply conjured up by his Pakatan Rakyat enemies for manipulative purposes.

NONE"Look at how they spin this issue," he told Malaysiakini.

'Khir is not sulking'

At the same time, Selangor Umno information chief Abdul Shukor Idrus concurred that Khir (left) could not attend the first phase of the road show because he wanted to "concentrate on his constituency" first.

"(Khir) is not sulking. It's just that he is not free yet, and we understand," Shukor said.

In the first phase, where various party leaders have been hitting the ceramah circuit around the state to discredit the Pakatan administration, Khir, who had led the state Umno for eight years, has been conspicuously missing.

Meanwhile, speculation is still rife that the party leadership helmed by Umno president Najib Abdul Razak - who is also the state party chief - is slowly easing out the taut-faced party veteran.

The first signs of ostracism became evident when Khir was unceremoniously dropped from the captaincy of the state Umno liaison committee when Najib took over the party presidency in 2009 and overhauled all the state committees.

However, the dentist-turned-politician remains an exco member in the Selangor liaison committee, but only because of automatic qualification as he heads the party's Sungai Besar division.

Things took an apparently strange turn when both Khir and Noh - the Tanjung Karang MP - organised separate press conferences and excursions at nearly the same time at each other's constituencies to "expose" illegal sand mines.

However, both have repeatedly insisted that there is no bad blood between them.

NONEAmidst the talk of infighting, a third force has apparently emerged in the form of former PKR youth chief Ezam Mohd Nor (right), who abandoned the party in 2008 to rejoin

Umno.

A former protege of PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, Ezam has been making his rounds in the "Save Selangor" roadshow, often appearing at ceramah sessions to lash out at his former boss.

The roadshow continues tonight at Semenyih and Taman Medan, where the ceramah will be held concurrently.

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