

**K'tan regent can be proclaimed new sultan: Prof
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Constitutional law expert Abdul Aziz Bari said that the Kelantan regent, Tengku Muhammad Faris Petra, can be appointed the new sultan amidst reports of a purported proclamation ceremony to be held at the palace tomorrow.

Abdul Aziz, who has written extensively on the Malaysian monarchy and the constitution, said that such a proclamation should be done by the Council of Succession, which is empowered with the task by the Kelantan constitution.

NONEAccording to the professor, the council is comparable to the Conference of Rulers, which has the same power in relation to appointing and dismissing the Agong.

"Both the Islamic principles as well as constitutional considerations lean on the side of appointing a new sultan as the present sultan is still sick and appears to be unable to carry out his constitutional duties," said Abdul Aziz,

However, he expressed concerns over the circumstances accompanying the news about the appointment of the regent, which he described as "rather mysterious".

"The process must be open and transparent," he said.

Utusan Malaysia has reported last Friday that according to its sources, Tengku Muhammad Faris would be proclaimed as the new Kelantan sultan to succeed his father, Tuanku Ismail Petra, who has been ill for a year.

It added that the proclamation ceremony would take place at the Throne Room of the Istana Balai Besar here, beginning at 11.30am.

However, Kelantan Menteri Besar Nik Aziz Nik Mat has denied any knowledge of the proclamation ceremony, saying that he had not received any letter from the palace about the matter.

Meanwhile, the Comptroller of the Kelantan Royal Household, Abdul Halim Hamad, when contacted by Bernama yesterday, had declined comment on the matter.

"I do not want to confirm or deny it. I have also not received any command from the regent to issue any statement on the matter," he said.

Bitter succession battle

According to state cabinet member Mohd Amar Nik Abdullah, he did receive a letter from the palace, but it was an invitation to attend a Hari Raya Aidilfitri gathering on Monday.

News of the purported proclamation came in the wake of a bitter succession battle between the regent, Tengku Muhammad Faris, and his younger brother, Tengku Muhammad Fakhry.

azlanLast year, Muhammad Faris removed his brother from the Council of Succession.

Amid the confusion, Abdul Aziz called on the palace to issue a clarification on the matter.

"In the interests of the people and state of Kelantan the rumours must be stopped and the palace authorities must do something about it. However, all must be done within the requirements and constraints put by the constitution.

"In the meantime, federal authorities must help as the federal constitution has undertaken to safeguard the rule of succession in the states."

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