

New K'tan sultan proclaimed
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Kelantan Regent Tengku Muhammad Faris has been proclaimed the 29th sultan of Kelantan, amidst claims that there is an attempt by 'conspirators' to oust his father from the throne.

Nik Aziz and Menteri Besar Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat (left) made the announcement about 12.30pm today, adding that the installation will be held "soon".

However, the date has not been fixed.

He said the Council of Succession had decided on the succession this morning.

The proclamation ceremony ended in 15 minutes, with Nik Aziz reciting verses from the Quran.

Members of the royal family and state assemblypersons had gathered at the Istana Balai Besar in Kota Bharu since 11.30am for the ceremony.

Sources confirmed that Sultan Ismail Petra Yahya Petra, his consort Raja Perempuan of Kelantan Tengku Anis Tengku Hamid and their third son Tengku Temenggong Tengku Muhammad Fakhry were not present.

However, Tengku Bendahara Tengku Muhammed Faiz Petra and the rest of the royal family, including two of the sultan's elder sisters - Tengku Rozan Petra and Tengku Salwani Petra - attended the ceremony.

NONEAs Sultan Ismail Petra (right) has been seriously ill for over a year, it is understood that Tengku Faris invoked Article 23A of the state constitution to ascend to the throne.

It states that the Council of Succession can appoint a new ruler in the event that the incumbent suffers a 'major disability'.

When contacted, Kelantan palace comptroller Abdul Halim Hamad refused comment, but said details will be revealed at a press conference at the Kubang Kerian palace at 2pm.

Reason not given

Some state assemblypersons said they were told to be present in their ceremonial black outfit, but were not told why.

"We are present because of the invitation, but details have not been given," said state legislative assembly deputy speaker Mohamad Zaki Ibrahim, when contacted.

Yesterday, Sultan Ismail Petra's eldest sister Tengku Merjan Sultan Yahya Petra had claimed in a statement that "conspirators" were trying to oust the incumbent ruler.

She said the state constitution declares that the sultan can only be replaced upon his death, or if he is absent without valid reason from the state for more than 12 months, or through abdication.

"Any attempt to remove a sultan by any other means would be tantamount to a coup d'etat," she said.

Tengku Merjan did not attend the proclamation ceremony.

Mingguan Malaysia broke the news yesterday quoting sources. However, Nik Abdul Aziz had told reporters that he is unaware of any such ceremony.

The Kelantan royal household has been in turmoil since Sultan Ismail Petra suffered a major stroke on May 14 last year.

This paved the way for Tengku Muhammad Faris - the eldest of the three princes - to be appointed the acting sultan.

He then removed his youngest brother Tengku Muhammad Fakhry from the Council of Succession. Tengku Muhammad Fakhry challenged this in court, but lost the suit.

Another major squabble between the two princes occurred when Sultan Ismail Petra was not allowed to board a plane for medical treatment in Singapore and was allegedly held captive with his consort and youngest son at a hospital.

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