

**New sultan proclamation can't be challenged: Council  
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The Kelantan Succession Council said the proclamation of Tengku Muhammad Faris Petra as the new sultan to succeed his ailing father Tuanku Ismail Petra Sultan Yahya Petra cannot be challenged in a court of law.

Lawyer Mohd Shukri Mohamad, who is a member of the council, said the proclamation decision was made by the Succession Council based on the amendment to the state constitution.

tengku faris kelantan 130910 "No one can challenge the decision of the council in the appointment or proclamation of the new sultan of Kelantan because it was done in accordance with the provisions of the state constitution," he told a news conference at the office of the Sultan of Kelantan at the Istana Balai Besar in Kota Bharu.

The Comptroller of the Kelantan Royal Household, Abdul Halim Hamad, was also present at the news conference.

Mohd Shukri, who claimed that he was instructed by the new sultan to hold the news conference, also referred to a media statement yesterday by a lawyer from the law firm, Messrs Rashid Zulkifli, claiming to represent Tuanku Ismail Petra, which questioned the decision of the council proclaiming the new sultan.

Mohd Shukri said Messrs Rashid Zulkifli had failed to furnish medical evidence to show that Tuanku Ismail Petra had the capacity to order the law firm to act on his behalf in the Federal Court where two petitions had been filed.

"Messrs Rashid Zulkifli has also failed to show any medical evidence that Tuanku Ismail Petra had the capacity to understand the contents of the petition and affidavits filed in the Federal Court," he said.

He said the Kelantan Constitution (Part Two) could be and was amended via proclamation by the Regent of Kelantan with the permission and agreement of the Succession Council.

Mohd Shukri claimed that the two petitions filed by Messrs Rashid Zulkifli in the Federal Court were not relevant to the issue of whether the amendment based on Article 3 of the State Constitution was valid or not.

Constitutional expert: Court can intervene

In Kuala Lumpur, constitutional expert Prof Emeritus Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi said Article 63 of the Kelantan state constitution provided for any confusion over the proclamation of Tengku Muhammad Faris Petra as the sultan to be cleared by the Federal Court.

Tshad faruqi 02he law lecturer of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) said the article provided for the sultan to refer to the Federal Court to clarify doubts arising from misinterpretation of the state constitution.

"It is stated clearly in Article 23(A) of the Kelantan State Constitution (Part Two) that should an investigation find that the sultan has a major handicap which can affect his capacity to

rule, the Succession Council has the right to find a successor.

"Nevertheless, I am sure the article will be questioned by certain quarters, such as whether the amendment to Article 23(A) on July 22 was carried out under valid conditions or otherwise," he said when contacted by Bernama.

Yesterday, Kelantan Menteri Besar Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, at a ceremony at the Throne Room of the Istana Balai Besar in Kota Bharu, proclaimed the Tengku Bendahara of Kelantan, Tengku Muhammad Fais Petra, the eldest son of Tuanku Ismail Petra, as the 29th sultan of Kelantan.

However, Tuanku Ismail Petra's elder sister, Tengku Merjan Sultan Yahya Petra, claimed that the proclamation of her nephew ran contrary to the state constitution, sparking what observers regard as a crisis in the Kelantan royal family.

Some family members in favour of Tuanku Ismail Petra continuing his rule as the sultan have even said they want to bring the matter to the Special Court in Putrajaya.

Historian Prof Emeritus Dr Khoo Kay Kim said every state in Malaysia had its own constitution and every case should be handled in accordance with the constitution and laws.

"However, if anyone raises a doubt and can prove that the appointment was unconstitutional, then the courts have to determine the next course of action," he told Bernama.

Meanwhile, the Persatuan Anak-Anak Kelantan Darul Naim Malaysia (Pakatan) has expressed undivided support to the new sultan.

Its president, Dr Noordin Ab Razak, said it was hoped that the new sultan could bring more development and progress to Kelantan with the support of the government, civil servants and the people.

Kelantanese welcome new sultan

In Kota Bharu, people interviewed said they were happy for the new sultan and hoped that the state would continue to develop and prosper under his rule.

Trader Lee Chuan Eng, 43, said Tuanku Muhammad Faris Petra was known to show great concern for the welfare of the people.

An entrepreneur in Jeli, Mohd Nazirin Razali, 29, said the people of Kelantan were fortunate to have a sultan who was prepared to go to the interior areas to meet the people and help resolve their problems.

Gold trader Abdul Aziz Mohd, 38, said he hoped that Kelantan would continue to prosper under the rule of the new sultan.

Zazali Mohd, 35, said Tuanku Muhammad Faris Petra was well respected by the people of Kelantan.

Kota Bharu Umno division chief Mohd Fatmi Che Salleh said he hoped that the proclamation of the new sultan would end the palace crisis and enable the people to

focus on development of the state.

Mohd Fatmi, who is the political secretary to the prime minister, said that for more than a year the crisis had kept the people wondering what would happen next.

- Bernama

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