

No likely rush to pick new S'gor Opposition Leader
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With former Menteri Besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo vacating his seat as Selangor Opposition Leader, speculation is rife as to who will replace him.

Keeping an almost iconic stature with his signature taut complexion during his two terms as MB, replacing Khir could well be an arduous task, considering that the remaining BN assemblypersons are seen to be of "lesser personality".

Usually polished in his delivery of speeches, whether in or outside the state assembly, the dentist-turned-politician found himself at the wrong end of the law when he was charged with corruption over his palatial house and land on Monday.

NONEKhir (left) reacted almost immediately by announcing that he would resign as opposition leader, while state assembly speaker Teng Chang Khim told Malaysiakini that it was "the prerogative of BN to decide who would be the next opposition leader".

Khir faxed his quit letter to Teng and Selangor Umno liaison chief Najib Razak this morning.

However, it is unlikely that filling the lofty position will be of utmost importance to the BN Selangor committee, which Prime Minister Najib also chairs, since the next state assembly sitting is only scheduled for March 2011.

The state BN leaders have pleaded ignorance of any meeting to discuss Khir's impending replacement.

Selangor MCA secretary Wong Koon Mun - also the Kuala Kubu Baru assemblyman - said he had not received information on any meeting to appoint a new opposition leader.

Next opposition leader must be of 'MB material'

Kuang assemblyman Abdul Shukor Idrus told Malaysiakini that although formal discussions were yet to take place, the decision to appoint a new opposition leader ultimately lay with Najib.

NONEHowever, several weeks before Khir was formally charged in court, the writings were already on the wall that his political career in Umno Selangor would end unceremoniously.

Despite Khir still commanding a sizeable amount of influence over the remaining Umno assemblypersons, Najib has indicated a state leadership reshuffle by the end of this year - in which Khir is not likely to be part of.

Traditionally, one would look towards the deputy opposition leader, who is Seri Serdang assemblyperson Satim Diman (above), to move up the ranks.

However, filling in the shoes of opposition leader will automatically require somebody of 'MB material', a person who can command the respect of the 20 BN assemblypersons and at the same time, match the wit of the Pakatan members.

Despite his current position, Satim - the Umno Selangor liaison committee secretary who was previously embroiled in speculation that he would resign from all his political posts - it appears that the local political warlords might have other candidates in mind.

On the other hand, Shukor's is one of the names speculated to lead the Opposition bench. Touted to be one of Khir's strongest supporters, Shukor (centre in picture on right) is also poised to rise in the party ranks, with speculation being that he could be the next liaison committee deputy chairperson.

His credentials in Umno are also not too shabby, having been the state Youth chief when Khir was helming Selangor.

But whether it is Shukor or Satim, being opposition leader means the person should not simply be a figurehead in the sometimes dry state assembly proceedings.

With the 13th general election widely speculated to be held as early as next year, the assembly opposition leader will also have to be a symbol of energy and change that BN Selangor desperately needs.

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