

Hishammuddin gunning for vice-presidency?

Malaysiakini.com

Jun 19, 2007

Nash Rahman and Muda Mohd Noor

Hishammuddin Hussein is expected to step down as Umno Youth chief and allow his deputy Khairy Jamaluddin to take over the post during the coming party elections.

This is not a shocking development as Hishammuddin had never contested for the post, it was handed to him.

The question now is what will be his next move?

Malaysiakini has learnt that efforts are underway to ensure that Hishammuddin contests and wins a vice-president's post. But observers are asking whether he has the support and the strength to do this.

At present, two of the three elected vice-presidents are Malacca Chief Minister Mohd Ali Rustam as well as Agriculture and Agro-Based Industries Minister Muhyiddin Yasin. The third, Isa Samad, had his victory nullified after being found guilty of practicing money politics.

Efforts to garner support for Hishammuddin will begin at the coming general elections, where he is expected to contest for a state seat. He will then be appointed as Johor menteri besar as the incumbent Abdul Ghani Othman will not be contesting.

Support from other states

As menteri besar, Hishammuddin will also be appointed as the state Umno liaison chairperson. Johor has 26 Umno divisions, the largest number in Malaysia. This will allow Hishammuddin to secure support from other states as well.

His focus will be on the states expected to get new menteris besar after the general elections and with a large number of Umno divisions such as Perak (24), Selangor (22), Pahang (14) and Kedah (15). Sabah (25) and Kelantan (14) can also help.

Apart from getting support from Umno Youth, which will be headed by Khairy by then, Hishammuddin can also obtain the backing of the 'Menteris Besar Club'.

Although the 'club' does not exist officially, it is an open secret that it is used by menteris besar to garner support, to at least win Umno supreme council seats in the face of challenges from Umno ministers.

Each division will send 13 delegates to the Umno general assembly. This is made up of six office bearers known as G6 and seven others, known as G7, who are elected during the division meeting.

The G6 are known to be ardent supporters of the 'menteris besar' club.

With the support from the G6 and with the help of Khairy, Hishammuddin will also be able to win votes from the G7 delegates.

Win-win situation

This will be a 'win-win' situation for both Hishammuddin and Khairy. Not only will Hishammuddin become menteri besar, he will also become a party vice-president.

Khairy, on the other hand, will get to head Umno Youth and by virtue of that post, also become a vice-president.

Khairy, the 31-year-old son-in-law of Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, may have learnt this move from Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Najib was once the number two in Umno Youth under former deputy premier and current opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim.

Anwar won the post after defeating incumbent Suhaimi Kamaruddin. Following this, Anwar's policy to 'Islamise' the movement had ruffled the feathers of many Youth excos.

Najib and his followers then struck upon the idea to oust Anwar from Umno Youth by campaigning for him contest for vice-presidency.

It is certain that Anwar knew of the real motive but at the same time, the move served in the former's interest as well.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.

Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/68812>