

Take a break, let Najib run the show
Malaysiakini.com
Apr 9, 2008
Muda Mohd Noor

The pressure on Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad is mounting following Barisan Nasional's calamitous outing in the March 8 polls. MCPX

The premier, who took over the reins in 2003, has come under constant attack from numerous quarters, including his predecessor Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Umno veteran Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

Now, it is learnt that a majority of Umno division leaders in Johor have asked Abdullah, who is their party president, to go on leave in order to assuage the anger of Umno members.

According to them, Abdullah should hand over his duties as Umno president and prime minister to his deputy Najib Abdul Razak during this period.

This call was made during a meeting between 20 division leaders with Johor Menteri Besar Abdul Ghani Othaman at the latter's residence in Johor Bahru early last week.

Six not invited

However, six other division leaders, who also hold ministerial positions, were not invited for the meeting.

These are Umno Youth chief Hishammuddin Hussein (Semberong), Shahrir Abdul Samad (Johor Bahru), Khaled Nordin (Pasir Gudang), Syed Hamid Albar (Kota Tinggi), Muhyiddin Yassin (Pagoh) and Dr Abdul Latiff Ahmad (Mersing).

Also not invited were Tourism Minister Azalina Othman Said and Deputy Human Resources Minister Noraini Ahmad.

Johor has a total of 26 Umno divisions, followed by Sabah (25), Perak (24) and Selangor (22).

Perak and Selangor fell into the hands of the opposition while in Johor, BN lost a parliamentary seat and six state seats.

"This (Abdullah going on leave) is the best way to save Umno from becoming a directionless party. The more Abdullah talks, more confusion arises," said a division leader who attended the meeting.

"Once the situation returns to normal, Abdullah can reassume the post or decide to let Najib continue," he added when contacted today.

The division leader said Umno grassroots in the state are concerned with the recent statements made by the prime minister.

The prime minister is scheduled to visit Johor tomorrow and meet with the state liaison committee.

Contest for presidency

According to the division leader, Abdullah must take the action before the Umno elections scheduled for December 16-20.

"We are worried that there will be unsuitable Umno leaders who will contest against Abdullah for presidency.

"In the present situation, it is not impossible for such a leader to win and if this happens, it will be difficult to rebuild Umno," he said.

As for the meeting with the menteri besar, the division leader said all those present were asked for their views regarding the elections.

He said two divisions - Batu Pahat and Muar - suggested that Umno hold an extraordinary general meeting to discuss the matter.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news//81131>