

After Khir, Ezam to lead Selangor Umno?
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SHAH ALAM - With the surprise prosecution, and consequently, fall from grace of former Selangor Menteri Besar Mohd Khir Toyo, speculation is rife that former PKR Youth chief Ezam Noor will helm Umno Selangor.

In what many describe is Umno's gratitude for his relentless condemnations of his former boss Anwar Ibrahim, an Umno source told Harakahdaily that current Umno president Najib Abdul Razak had been at the forefront of efforts to have Ezam as a member in the party's state liaison committee.

"Ezam was touted as the Umno leader in Selangor because there are no other figures more reliable in Najib's eyes.

"After all, Noh Omar is still needed by Najib at the federal level," said the source, referring to Noh, the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry minister who is Umno Selangor's deputy chairman, according to Harakahdaily.

"So the project of capturing Selangor from Pakatan Rakyat will be placed on Ezam due to his many contacts in PKR," it added.

Earlier Monday, Khir was charged for corruption under Section 165 of the Penal Code alongside company director Shamsuddin Haryoni.

The case is related to his palatial residence in Shah Alam.

Khir allegedly took bribe in form of two plots of land in Section 7, Shah Alam, for his mansion, popularly known as 'Bali Castle', at a substantial discount from Shamsuddin. The latter had allegedly abetted with Khir by selling him two plots of lands in 2007, which he bought for RM6.5 million in 2004, for just RM3.5 million. They were both released on RM750,000 bail respectively.

According to Harakahdaily, the source said Ezam's appointment as Selangor Umno's liaison chief, a position currently held by Najib himself, was a matter of time

"Selangor is of utmost importance to BN because its economy can help strengthen Umno," said the source.

Another source even said that the fear by Pakatan Rakyat that the membership of the controversial People's Volunteer Corps (Rela) would be boosted in Selangor to engineer a BN victory was not unfounded.

The source said the plan to boost Rela membership by 300,000 next year would likely materialise because plans had been underway to capture the state through the equally controversial 'postal votes', and added that the process of absorbing Rela members as voters was "being conducted secretly".

"This has been done successfully in Terengganu in 2004 after the voter turnout rose by 95 percent," it told Harakahdaily.

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