

Newspaper

The Star

Date

30 January 2016

MB crisis 'resolved soon'

Najib drops hint after meeting with Kedah Regency Council

The Star - 30/1/2016

By JOCELINE TAN

joceline@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has hinted that the political crisis over the Kedah Mentri Besar issue is about to be resolved following his audience with the Kedah Regency Council.

The Prime Minister said he had presented suggestions to the royal body and that a formal announcement on the Mentri Besar matter would be made in due course.

The Umno president, who spoke to the media after an Umno supreme council meeting yesterday, did not share any further details but a party insider said he assured the closed-door meeting that "it is all settled".

The insider said that he told the supreme council members that there were only a few more things to work out and a solution would take place "very soon".

It is understood that Najib's meeting with the Regency Council earlier in the day went smoothly and that only one name was presented.

The proposed name is believed to be deputy Kedah Umno chairman Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah, who is also a senator and Deputy Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister.

It was learnt that the royal body had also asked for a formal letter on Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir's status in Umno.

It was also learnt that the Regency Council had summoned him for an audience at 4pm yesterday but an aide said he was at home in his Bukit Tunku residence.

The road bump to a final solution appears to be Mukhriz who is still defiant and refuses to step down.

He created a stir at the Putra World Trade Centre when he tried to gate-crash the supreme council meeting.



Stepping out: Mukhriz being mobbed by reporters after exiting Menara Dato Onn in Kuala Lumpur.

He arrived at about 3pm and proceeded to the meeting room where he took a seat but he eventually left.

"They said those who were present but were not invited should leave but it was aimed at me," he told reporters.

Mukhriz is neither an elected or appointed supreme council member and he can only attend upon a formal invitation.

When met after Friday prayers at Masjid Negara, he told reporters he had not received any information that his replacement would be sworn in next week.

"I cannot comment. Your sources are doubtful," he said.

His aides were still mobilising supporters in Kedah to hold demonstrations calling for him to stay on. There was a protest of about 20 people yesterday in front of Ahmad Bashah's service centre in Alor Setar.

They came with a long banner declaring support for Mukhriz and held up posters running down Ahmad Bashah but the protest lasted only about 15 minutes.

Kedah sources said that Najib had offered Mukhriz an olive branch in the form of a deputy minister post when they met in Langkawi last weekend.

The Prime Minister had explain-

ed to Mukhriz that it would be difficult to continue as Mentri Besar if the party does not support him. But Mukhriz is said to have rejected the gesture.

The Kedah crisis erupted after 14 division warlords declared they had lost confidence in Mukhriz's leadership and urged the party president to take action.

Since then, a total of 19 Barisan Nasional assemblymen have signed statutory declarations to endorse the change.

On Wednesday, Mukhriz had to cancel a state exco meeting after only three exco members turned up.