

Photo op among Umno leaders sets tongues wagging

The Star - 29/7/2022 pg-2

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
mazwin@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Photographs of Umno's top five leaders posted on social media have piqued the interest of many, particularly since it comes at a time when the party is facing issues, including its application to the Registrar of Societies (ROS) to defer the party's election, which is still pending.

Eyes are also on Umno, in particular its vice-president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, who was said to have signed an agreement with Perikatan Nasional last year.

The photographs of Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and the party's top four office bearers were posted on the Facebook page as well as the Instagram of Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, one of the three vice-presidents.

Khaled uploaded two photographs of the five of them sitting around a coffee table, with Ismail Sabri seated next to the party president.

"Photographs of Umno's Top 5. Every meeting is conducted with respect, and discussions are open. Our understanding is for the interest of the country and our party.

"Any talk of clusters or the highest



leadership being at odds or not united is absolutely untrue," wrote Khaled.

The five refer to Ahmad Zahid, deputy president Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan and vice-presidents Ismail Sabri, Khaled and Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid.

When asked about the photographs he uploaded, Khaled quipped, "There is a hidden message there. What the message is, I will not tell.

"But there is nothing, really. We just wanted to pose for photos."

Khaled said the five of them had not held a meeting for some time.

"We discussed many things related to the party. Yes, we did discuss the general election, preparations, our machinery and other matters," he said.

When asked if the meeting had discussed possible dates to call for the national polls, the Umno vice-president was non-committal.

At the Umno general assembly in March, Ismail Sabri said the top five leaders would make a decision regarding the party's intention to push for early polls.

The current Parliamentary term expires in July 2023.

After the 2018/2021 term ended

No hidden message:

(From left)

Mahdzir, Ahmad Zahid, Ismail Sabri, Mohamad and Khaled document their meeting with a photo. — Pic from Khaled Nordin's FB page

Separately, Perikatan Nasional said it would send a delegation to meet the Prime Minister to discuss the implementation of terms of the agreement signed between them.

Citing disappointment over what it claimed as a lack of determination and commitment to fulfil what had been agreed, the coalition secretary-general Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin expressed hope the meeting could be held soon.

Hamzah said this was decided at the Perikatan supreme council meeting on Wednesday night.

"We will send a delegation to discuss the execution of the terms of the agreement soon," he said in a statement.

According to reports, an agreement was inked between Perikatan chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Ismail Sabri in August last year.

The agreement is on the appointment of a deputy prime minister from Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia, among other things.

Muhyiddin resigned as prime minister on Aug 16 last year.

Hamzah also said the meeting discussed the Perikatan convention, which would be held on Aug 27 in conjunction with its second anniversary, as well as the launching of Terengganu Perikatan tomorrow.

"The meeting also made several important decisions to enhance preparedness for GE15," he said.

on June 30 last year, Umno postponed its party election for 18 months, which meant that the polls for the 2021/2023 term had to be held before Dec 30 this year.

However, the general assembly in March agreed to defer the party polls.

An extraordinary general meeting was then held in May, which saw 2,586 delegates vote to support a motion to amend the party constitution to defer the polls.

Umno submitted its application for amendments to be made to the party constitution but has yet to receive a reply from the ROS.