

MUHYIDDIN MOOTS AXING CHAIRMAN POST

Former coalition
chief proposes 2
new bodies led by
Pas and Bersatu

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TAN Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has proposed abolishing the post of Perikatan Nasional chairman and restructuring the coalition's leadership, amid internal disputes over the appointment of a new head.

In a letter addressed to leaders of Pas, Gerakan and the Malaysian Indian People's Party (MIPP), the former prime minister said Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia and Pas had agreed that PN should be reorganised through the creation of two new bodies — a presidential council led by Bersatu and an executive council chaired by Pas.

He said the presidential council would serve as the coalition's highest decision-making body, setting policy, while the executive council would manage day-to-day administration in line with those decisions.

"With the restructuring of PN, the position of chairman will be abolished, and the question of appointing a new chairman will no longer arise," he added.

The move follows weeks of internal wrangling within PN over who should assume the coal-

tion's top leadership role, after disagreements emerged among its component parties on succession arrangements and the balance of power within the bloc.

The proposal followed a meeting at Muhyiddin's residence on Jan 16 with Pas president Tan Sri Abdul Hadi Awang, as well as the party's deputy president and secretary-general.

Muhyiddin had said Hadi had stressed the need for PN to remain a coalition capable of attracting support from Malaysia's multiracial society, including in Sabah and Sarawak.

He had added that Gerakan and MIPP leaders had been briefed on the agreement and had expressed their support for the plan.

However, tensions resurfaced after he was informed that PN's deputy secretary-general had issued a notice for an extraordinary supreme council meeting scheduled for today, with the appointment of a new chairman listed as an agenda item.

Muhyiddin had said he did not receive the notice and was not invited to attend.

He had argued that the proposed meeting and its agenda ran counter to the earlier consensus reached among Bersatu, Pas, Gerakan and MIPP.

Calling for the extraordinary meeting to be cancelled, Muhyiddin instead invited all PN party presidents to a "pre-council" discussion at his residence at the same time, to be held today.

He had said such a meeting among party leaders was already agreed as a necessary step before any supreme council session.

Muhyiddin also outlined im-

mediate steps to implement the restructuring, including the formation of committees within each member party to review amendments to PN's constitution, consultations among party presidents on the proposed changes and a supreme council meeting to formally approve them.

When contacted by the *New Straits Times*, Pas deputy president Datuk Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man would only say that PN would handle internal matters "harmoniously" after agreeing to postpone the extraordinary meeting.

He said the decision had already been made to defer the meeting.

"The postponement of the PN meeting has been decided, and a discussion and pre-council meeting will be held tomorrow night (tonight). We will discuss matters harmoniously within the consensus of PN," he said.

Tuan Ibrahim said the meeting today would discuss proposed amendments to the coalition's constitution and issues related to Muhyiddin's resignation as PN chairman.

"The meeting is expected to finalise (Muhyiddin's) resignation as PN chairman and begin discussions on a few other issues," said the Kubang Kerian member of parliament.

Tuan Ibrahim said the possibility of amendments to the party constitution and issues related to Muhyiddin's resignation were under active discussion among the coalition's leadership.

"All this will be clarified at the appropriate forum," he added.