

PAS claims mutiny in Umno
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By Clara Chooi



Mustafa claimed Umno was seeking to jettison Najib and Rosmah (both seated) to avoid disaster at the ballot box. — file pic

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 4 — PAS claimed today of a huge uprising within Umno to oust Datuk Seri Najib Razak amid fears that the prime minister and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor would cost Barisan Nasional (BN) its hold on Putrajaya in the coming polls.

But the Islamist party claimed that Najib was fully aware of this movement and has refused to step down as he is determined to lead BN into the polls, expected to be held in coming months.

PAS secretary-general Datuk Mustafa Ali told a press conference here today that this was the reason Umno had purportedly “engineered” rumours that Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders have been courting Umno veteran Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah to replace Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as opposition leader.

Mustafa would not say if the anti-Najib movement was led by the latter’s deputy, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, but claimed that he had received the information from reliable sources.

He added that the movement was significant, involves leaders from the upper echelons of the ruling party and would rear its head soon.

“They feel that Najib-Rosmah has become a liability to BN and they want him to step down because they fear this will affect their performance in the coming elections,” he said.

He said that, among others, Umno leaders fear that the scandals involving Najib and Rosmah, such as the Scorpene submarines purchase and its link to the murder of Mongolian model Altantuya Shaaribuu, would affect voter sentiment towards BN during the polls.

Opposition leaders have repeatedly linked Najib and Rosmah to the scandal, which is currently being probed in France, and the government's recent decision to deport French lawyer William Bourdon fuelled their suspicion further.

Rosmah has also been criticised for her purportedly extravagant spending habits, with latest news reports claiming that she had purchased a RM24 million diamond ring from world-renowned jeweller Jacob & Co.

"You cannot separate Najib and Rosmah," Mustafa said, when asked if Najib's detractors were merely unhappy with the prime minister's wife and not him.

He added that his allegation was not an attempt to wage a "psychological war" against Umno, claiming that the movement was a "real thing".

"Najib is aware but he is adamant. He has said 'no'," said Mustafa.

An online news portal reported on speculation of the revolt yesterday, claiming that Najib's detractors were former Umno MPs from Penawar who were aligned to Muhyiddin.

The news report said that Penawar, headed by ex-Cabinet minister Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin who was Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's former political secretary, had decided at a meeting last week that it was time for Najib to step down.

Quoting a source from Penawar, the portal said the group was unhappy with Najib's leadership for several unknown reasons and would hold another meeting today.

The portal also pointed out that blogger Mohd Sayuti Omar had written on Penawar's call to Najib to step down and claimed that those present at its meeting were Muhyiddin's brother Aziz Yassin, former Youth and Sports Minister Mokhtar Hashim and Tamrin Ghaffar, the son of former deputy premier Tun Ghaffar Baba.

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