

**In Khairy, Putrajaya trusts
Malaysian Insider
Feb 20, 2014
OLEH The Malaysia Insider**

Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin took the lead in tearing down P. Waytha Moorthy's argument for quitting the Najib administration, saying yesterday the Hindraf leader was not a team player and had demanded a budget for the Indian community under his own charge.

Other ministers also followed Khairy's revelations which were made on his Twitter account, in what was a concerted attempt some nine days after Waytha Moorthy resigned.

But it is not an accident that Khairy is coming to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and the government's defence faster than anyone else these days. And in the days ahead, the first-term Youth and Sports Minister will play an even bigger role.

The reason: in a largely listless and incompetent cabinet, he is a shining light, akin to the one-eyed man in the kingdom of the blind.

No other minister has come out as forcefully as Khairy in defending Najib and the government in the past few months. He has been active throughout the country, taking to Twitter and energetically networking for Putrajaya.

In addition, there is growing belief in the Najib camp that when Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his band of critics ramp up attack on the prime minister and the first family, it is the likes of Khairy who will come to fore as the first line of defence.

Of course, this is a risky strategy for the young politician popularly known as KJ because he does not need Najib's enemies to become his enemies. But does he have a choice?

If Dr Mahathir and gang succeed in hounding Najib out of office anytime soon, it is almost certain that Khairy's path to the top will be blocked by those who want to see a Mahathir dynasty of sorts in the shape of Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir taking a leading role.

After all, it is no secret that one of Dr Mahathir's chief point of contention against Najib is Najib's decision to push for the status quo in the contest for the Umno vice-president's position last year.

Mukhriz lost by a mere nine votes to Najib's cousin, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein, which Mahathir's camp blamed on the block voting in the Umno president's home state of Pahang.

But Khairy's elevation as Najib's go-to guy also signals the dwindling choices the prime minister has for a first line of defence. While the great majority of supreme council and ministers are firmly in Najib's corner, they have neither the stomach nor smarts for a battle in the trenches with the Umno president's growing band of critics.

It is also a major climbdown for the First Family who have in the past treated Khairy with indifference or disdain as he was seen as the prime mover in Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's government.

When Najib took over from Abdullah in April 2009, the Umno Youth chief was snubbed for a cabinet post which was instead given to his then deputy Datuk Razali Ibrahim,

But Khairy persevered and was named as minister after the 2013 general election despite last-minute objections from the Mahathir camp. It was understood that he was named to another ministry but was switched to allay concerns of the Mahathir camp.

The Umno Youth chief was also the chief spokesman for BN and Umno in the days after the May 5 general election when the coalition lost a further seven seats to Pakatan Rakyat.

Ironically, he will be speaking at the same Malaysian youth conference as Dr Mahathir this weekend in Manchester, United Kingdom, on the theme of "Globalising Youth in Malaysia." - February 20, 2014.

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/in-khairy-putrajaya-trusts>