

Respect Muhyiddin, still Umno's No. 2, says Johor menteri besar
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Johor's Umno divisions can go ahead and invite the party's deputy president, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, to officiate their respective meetings as he still holds the post despite no longer being deputy prime minister, the state's menteri besar said.

Datuk Mohamed Khaled Nordin urged Umno members to respect the number two post in Umno even though Muhyiddin was no longer part of the Cabinet, adding that it was the prime minister's prerogative to drop his deputy.

"When the prime minister visited Johor recently on May 15, Umno Johor made a decision that he needed to be empowered to settle the problems he was facing, especially on 1MDB," Khaled said in a statement, referring to debt-ridden state investor 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

"So if it had to come in the form of a Cabinet reshuffle and the need to drop the deputy prime minister. We accept the decision, more so because we realise it is the prime minister's right.

"We pray that the new line-up is able to settle all issues facing the country, given the prime minister's assurance to settle them within a reasonable time frame," Khaled said.

He also hoped that the people of Johor, especially Umno members, would be patient in going through this period and respect Muhyiddin's position as the party's second in command.

"In Johor, I will not stop any division that has or intends to invite the deputy president of Umno to officiate their meetings.

"We pray Allah gives us strength to find the truth in the end," he added.

Yesterday's Cabinet reshuffle saw Muhyiddin dropped as deputy prime minister and replaced with Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who will continue to hold his Home Ministry portfolio.

Muhyiddin, 68, also lost his Education portfolio.

The reshuffle also saw the elevation of Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed to deputy home minister, as well as of three other PAC members – a move which puts on hold the bi-partisan committee's probe into 1MDB until new members are appointed at the next parliamentary sitting.

Muhyiddin had been openly critical of the prime minister's handling of 1MDB and its RM42 billion debts.

At a recent Umno division meeting in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur, he also said Najib must explain The Wall Street Journal's allegation that more than US\$700 million (RM2.67 billion) from 1MDB-linked entities was channelled into the prime minister's personal bank accounts.

1MDB is particularly sensitive for the government, as Najib is its advisory board chairman and also heads the Finance Ministry, which owns 1MDB. – July 29, 2015.

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