

Defiant Umno divisions want Muhyiddin, Shafie to address their meetings

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By Md Izwan

Three Umno divisions are going ahead with invitations to Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal to officiate annual meetings despite their sacking from the Cabinet, indicating a rift in Barisan Nasional.

Unlike some jittery divisions which cancelled their invitations to the duo, Umno divisions of Kluang, Hulu Selangor and Kemaman are sticking by their decision to invite Muhyiddin and Shafie to attend their assemblies, saying they were ready to face any repercussions from it.

"Yes, we will continue with our programme this Sunday with Tan Sri," said Kluang Umno division chief Md Jais Sarday, referring to Muhyiddin.

The Johor exco member shrugged off the possibility that his actions would be seen as going against the current norm where many divisions had either cancelled invitations or were considering such a decision.

"Never mind, wait until this Sunday when Muhyiddin comes. I will speak at the function," he said.

Muhyiddin, who was sacked as deputy prime minister and education minister on July 28, is scheduled to open the Kluang Umno division meeting at 10am Sunday at Dewan Jubli Intan.

Muhyiddin was to officiate Raub Umno's annual meeting on August 15, but the division cancelled the officiating ceremony following Tuesday's Cabinet reshuffle, which also saw Shafie, an Umno vice-president, being dropped as the rural and regional minister.

Umno divisions in Batu Gajah and Ipoh Barat had also cancelled their invitations to Shafie, who was scheduled to officiate their meetings this weekend.

A Johor Umno spokesman struck a defiant note when he said it is not wrong to continue with its programmes with Muhyiddin as he is still the party deputy president.

"Tan Sri Muhyiddin is still our leader, he is still the deputy president. Moreover, we invited him before the cabinet reshuffle. Is it wrong for us to invite one of the party's top leaders?" he asked.

Besides Kluang, Muhyiddin is also scheduled to open the Kemaman division meeting headed by former Terengganu menteri besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Said, who fell out with Najib after he was dropped as MB.

Muhyiddin's special officer confirmed the invitation but the date and venue for the division meeting has yet to be finalised.

At the same time, Shafie will also continue with his programme to officiate the party's Hulu Selangor division's Women, Youth and Puteri meetings at IKBN Pertak, Kuala Kubu Baru, Selangor.

"Programme with Datuk Seri Shafie will continue, we have made preparations for a long time and it is not nice if this is cancelled at the last minute," said a spokesman for the division who did not want to be identified.

He said the matter should not be blown out of proportion as Najib is scheduled to open the divisional meeting the next day.

"This is not a big issue, to us, both are still main Umno leaders," he said.

Political observer and Umno member, Shahbudin Husin, expects things to heat up in any party programmes involving the axed duo, saying what happened at the Cheras Umno meeting on Sunday might be repeated.

At the meeting, Muhyiddin criticised debt-laden 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), which is the brainchild of Najib.

Many speculated that Muhyiddin and Shafie were removed due to their criticism of Najib over the 1MDB affair.

"Any party programmes attended by Muhyiddin dan Shafie will definitely be hot. The grassroots will want to hear from the mouths of these two leaders who were booted off from Najib's Cabinet," Shahbudin told The Malaysian Insider.

Shahbudin said both might continue criticising Najib and further heat up the party's internal politics.

"If the Cheras Umno opening was hot, I expect there will be more controversies after this," he said.

The turmoil in Umno was expected to come to a head today at the Umno Supreme Council but in an apparent move to stave this off, Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor announced the cancellation of the meeting.

Muhyiddin and Shafie were expected to use the Supreme Council meeting to voice out their dissatisfaction towards Najib. – July 31, 2015.

Source:

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