

## **Shafie Apdal switches Najib with Muhyiddin to grace Umno division meeting**

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**By Md Izwan**

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, dropped from the Cabinet last week, retaliated when he cancelled an invitation to party president Datuk Seri Najib Razak to open the Semporna Umno division assembly later this month.

Sources told The Malaysian Insider that Shafie, who is the Semporna division chief, has instead invited Umno deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin to open the meeting.

Shafie and Muhyiddin were the top two Umno personalities dropped in Najib's Cabinet reshuffle last week.

Both had been critical of Najib's handling of the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal, the Finance Ministry-owned strategic investor which is also Najib's brain child.

"The political scenario has changed," said an Umno source close to Shafie on the cancellation.

The Malaysian Insider contacted one of Najib's officers and is still awaiting a response.

Shafie's officer, who accompanied the former rural and regional development minister back to Sabah yesterday, also declined to comment.

"Just wait till August 15," said the officer, referring to the date of the Semporna division assembly.

It is a tradition for Umno divisions, which represent the collective voice of its grassroots members, to invite top party leaders in the Supreme Council to officiate at their assemblies.

It is learnt that Najib's invitation was made before the July 28 Cabinet reshuffle. Shafie arrived in Semporna yesterday, the constituency he has represented since 1995. It is his first time back since he was dropped in the Cabinet reshuffle.

His arrival at the Kota Kinabalu airport was greeted by a raucous crowd of about 200 supporters, with banners announcing their support for him.

Besides Umno members, he was also greeted by representatives from local Bumiputera group, Kadazan Dusun Murut Malaysia Association (KDM).

Like Muhyiddin, Shafie's ouster appeared to be related to his open criticism of Najib

and his handling of the 1MDB controversy.

1MDB, which racked up debts totaling RM42 billion, is currently being investigated by the Auditor-General and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

A high-powered task force is also probing into allegations that 1MDB-related money had been transferred into Najib's personal bank accounts. – August 4, 2015.

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