

BN lawmakers likely to discuss no-confidence vote against Najib today

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By Md Izwan

The Barisan Nasional (BN) pre-council meeting tonight at Datuk Seri Najib Razak's official residence is expected to be an important one, an Umno MP said, because of speculation over a no-confidence vote against the prime minister during the Dewan Rakyat sitting that begins tomorrow.

The MP, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said all BN federal lawmakers and senators have been told to meet Najib today at Seri Perdana in Putrajaya at 8pm.

The Malaysian Insider sighted the notice in a letter from the BN headquarters and dated October 9, and issued to all BN ministers, deputy ministers, members of parliament and senators.

The Umno lawmaker who told The Malaysian Insider of today's meeting said it was an important one because of speculation that there would be BN lawmakers willing to support a no-confidence vote against Najib brought by the opposition.

Najib is under pressure over alleged financial wrongdoing in his brainchild, state-owned investment firm 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), and over the RM2.6 billion political donation channelled into his personal bank accounts from unknown Middle Eastern benefactors.

"It is going to be a very important meeting, because of the (Dewan Rakyat) sitting that will begin on Monday.

"Furthermore, there is already a move by opposition members to file a motion for a vote of no-confidence in the Dewan Rakyat.

"Najib would be worried about such a development, combined with the turmoil that Umno is facing at the moment," said the lawmaker.

The source added that a few veteran MPs might not attend the pre-council meeting, namely, Pagoh MP Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Semporna MP Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal and Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

Muhyiddin had been sacked as deputy prime minister and Shafie dropped as rural and regional development minister in a cabinet reshuffle on July 28. Both had been critical of Najib's handling of 1MDB.

These three leaders had also appeared in a joint press conference with former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad last week to condemn the use of a security law against 1MDB critics.

The press conference had also touched on a no-confidence vote against Najib.

Opposition MP Hee Loy Sian of PKR has already submitted a notice to table a motion of no-confidence against the prime minister, as revealed by the Dewan Rakyat order paper available on the Parliament website.

It is uncertain, however, if the motion will be heard given its slot near the bottom of the agenda, which typically prioritises government matters.

The Dewan Rakyat sitting that begins tomorrow will run for seven weeks and will be the last for the year.

It will see Najib table Budget 2016 this Friday, but is also expected to see heated exchanges in the house as opposition MPs are likely to raise issues stemming from the 1MDB controversy and the RM2.6 billion.

Whether the motion of no-confidence against the prime minister succeeds, there is also the appointment of new Public Accounts Committee members (PAC) and the resumption of its probe into 1MDB, as well as concerns about the scandal's impact on the economy and Malaysia's global reputation.

The Umno source added that the recent statement by the Malay rulers expressing their concerns over 1MDB could not be ignored, and would surely influence debates in the Dewan Rakyat.

"1MDB has become the focus because of the Conference of Rulers' statement on October 6 wanting the issue to be resolved quickly.

"Inevitably, 1MDB will be discussed. The rulers' statement is a serious matter and if not addressed, can pose a serious challenge to Najib." – October 18, 2015.

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