

Mukhriz's Short Reign as Kedah Menteri Besar

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 3 (Bernama) -- In about three months, it should be three years of Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir's tenure as Kedah menteri besar, but today he lost the post after many Kedah UMNO leaders withdrew their support for him.

At a press conference at Wisma Darul Aman in Alor Setar, Mukhriz announced his resignation as menteri besar after being informed yesterday that he had lost majority support in the Kedah Legislative Assembly.

The son of former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad took his oath of office as the state's 11th menteri besar on May 6, 2013 after Barisan Nasional (BN) wrested back Kedah from PAS in the 13th General Election, the same year.

However, signs of Mukhriz's shaky position emerged since last Jan 20, after almost all of the Kedah UMNO leaders, including the party's members of Parliament and state assemblymen stated openly their loss of confidence in his leadership as menteri besar and as Kedah UMNO Liaison Committee chairman.

Their stand was voiced out by the state UMNO liaison deputy chief Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah himself after a closed-door meeting with almost all the MPs and assemblymen from Kedah UMNO.

Mukhriz, 51, had replaced Datuk Seri Azizan Abdul Razak from PAS as menteri besar after BN took back Kedah from the opposition pact with a simple majority, winning 21 of the 36 state assembly seats.

His appointment to the state's top post was historic as it was the second time that the son of a prime minister of this country assumed the menteri besar post after current Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who became Pahang's 12th menteri besar in 1982.

Mukhriz's involvement in politics started rather late, after his father had retired from office, as Dr Mahathir had ordered that no member of his family should be involved in politics for as long as he was prime minister.

Initially, the political career of this fifth child of Dr Mahathir's seven children was rather

insignificant after he failed in his attempt to win the Kubang Pasu UMNO Youth chief post in July 2004.

However, he garnered the most number of votes for an UMNO Youth Exco post in September, the same year.

His political career became brighter when in the 12th General Election in 2008, he won the Jerlun parliamentary seat in Kedah after defeating Idris Ahmad from PAS with a 2,205-vote majority.

That victory resulted in his appointment as International Trade and Industry deputy minister by Prime Minister Najib in 2009.

In the 13th General in 2013, Mukhriz contested for the Ayer Hitam state seat and he defeated his opponent, Abd Ghani Ahmad from PAS, with a 2,446-vote majority.

Throughout his political career, Mukhriz had twice failed in UMNO's top-level elections.

He lost to Khairy Jamaluddin for the post of party Youth chief for the 2008-2011 term, and also failed to get the UMNO vice-president post in the party elections in October 2013.

Mukhriz married Datin Norzieta Zakaria on Nov 14, 1993. The couple is blessed with two daughters, Meera Alyanna and Melia Serena, and a son, Misha Hakeem.

A former student of the Mara Junior Science College (MRSM) in Kota Bharu, Mukhriz earned a degree in Business Administration from Sophia University, Japan, in 1982 and another in International Marketing from Boston University, USA, in 1987.

Before going into politics, Mukhriz was active in the corporate sector where he held a number of positions, including as M. Ocean Diving Sdn Bhd managing director, OPCOM Holdings Berhad chairman and managing director, and as Ajiya Bhd executive officer.

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