

Najib wants Kedah reps to accept new menteri besar, announcement expected today

Malaysian Insider

Feb 1, 2016

By Md Izwan

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak wants Kedah Barisan Nasional (BN) assemblymen he met yesterday to accept a new menteri besar who will replace Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir, an Umno Kedah source revealed.

Najib, who is also Umno president, met the BN reps again at his private residence in Jalan Duta, Kuala Lumpur, to tell them that he obtained the consent of the Kedah Sultan and the Regency Council to replace Mukhriz.

"Najib called all the assemblymen to announce that he has the consent of the Palace.

"The letter from the Kedah Sultan has been received and Najib has announced to the Regency Council the person to replace Mukhriz," the source said.

However, Najib did not reveal the new menteri besar during the meeting but expressed hope that all present would accept the decision, to be made known today.

"He did not announce the name of the new menteri besar, he just hoped that all of us would accept the decision," the source said.

Media reports have speculated that three names were presented to the palace for consideration, but this was not revealed by Najib himself.

Various media reported that deputy liaison chief Datuk Ahmad Bashah Hanipah would be appointed to the post.

As to the meeting between all the assemblymen and the Regency Council at Wisma Darul Aman in Kedah, the source said that it was merely a formality before a new menteri besar is appointed.

"The meeting with the assemblymen is just a formality.

"The decision and consent have been obtained to change the menteri besar," the source said.

The meeting with Najib last night lasted two hours with all the assemblymen in attendance except for Mukhriz, who is Ayer Hitam assemblyman, and his ally Datuk Aminuddin Omar, the Jitra assemblyman.

"The meeting went well and those present accepted Najib's decision to replace Mukhriz," he said.

The swearing-in is expected to take place before the state exco meets this

Wednesday.

"If it is only done after Wednesday, it would add to the chaos in the state administration," the source added.

The assemblymen's meeting with Najib also discussed rearrangements of Kedah exco portfolios.

Eight exco members are to retain their portfolios while Amiruddin is likely to be dropped.

He is in charge of youth and sports, arts and culture and human development.

"One of the conditions of changing the menteri besar is that the existing exco line-up will be maintained.

"Only Aminuddin will be dropped and his replacement will be named by the new menteri besar," the source added.

The imbroglio over Kedah's menteri besar has gone on for more than a week since Bashah held the press conference on January 20 demanding Mukhriz's removal.

Chronology:

January 20: A group of 15 Kedah division and wing leaders led by Ahmad Bashah hold a press conference declaring a loss of confidence in Mukhriz's leadership and urged Najib's intervention.

January 22: Najib meets with the Umno division heads, state representative and also the Kedah exco members at the party headquarters in Kuala Lumpur to discuss the Kedah crisis.

January 23: Najib and Mukhriz meet in Langkawi. Sources said that Najib offered him a federal deputy minister position as a swap but Mukhriz rejected this.

January 24: Umno Kedah starts collecting sworn statements on removing Mukhriz. Media reports say 19 assemblymen have signed sworn statements rejecting Mukhriz as menteri besar.

January 25: Mukhriz and two exco members meet with the Kedah Regency Council chairman, Tan Sri Tunku Sallehuddin Sultan Badlishah, to inform him about the political crisis in the state.

January 27: Najib meets Kedah Sultan Tuanku Sultan Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah, who is also the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, to obtain his consent to appoint a new menteri besar. Meanwhile, Mukhriz chairs weekly exco meeting but only three exco members turn up, in a sign that he no longer enjoys support to run the state administration.

January 29: Najib meets Kedah Regency Council to obtain consent to remove Mukhriz.

January 31: Najib meets Kedah BN assemblymen at his residence in Jalan Duta to announce that the political crisis has been settled and that a new menteri besar will be announced after they meet with the state Regency Council today. – February 1, 2016.

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