

Bashah is new MB

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ENTHUSIASTIC:

Undeterred by opposition, he is confident of consolidating state leaders' support

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DATUK Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah is confident he will be able to consolidate support from Kedah Umno leaders and members, including former menteri besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir.

Bashah, who will be sworn in as the new menteri besar today at Istana Anak Bukit here, said he would not be deterred by the opposition from Mukhriz's supporters.

"I am not worried. I am confident we will gain back the support of those who are supporting Mukhriz as they are also party members who love Kedah and Umno.

"I am also confident that Mukhriz will support us," said Bashah at Kedah Umno's office at Bangunan Tunku here yesterday.

He said Kedah would remain peaceful as this was not the first time a transfer of leadership had taken place.

"The change in menteri besar has happened several times and yet, we have remained united. The important thing is we work together to carry out our duties and responsibilities as the ruling party.



Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah will be sworn in as Kedah menteri besar today.

God willing, we will be able to continue governing the state."

He brushed off claims that he was eyeing the menteri besar's position, stressing that the move to replace Mukhriz was the desire of Kedah Umno leaders, comprising division chiefs, wings chiefs and state executive councillors.

"I did lead the group of Kedah Umno leaders during the press conference on Jan 20, declaring our loss of confidence in Mukhriz's leadership as menteri besar and Kedah Umno Liaison Committee chairman, but I was not eyeing the (menteri besar's) position.

"I do not covet the position as claimed by certain parties.

"It is the opinion and desire of state Umno leaders that there is a need for a change in the state's leadership.

"And as Umno liaison committee deputy chairman, I was doing my part to voice out their wishes."

Bashah dismissed allegations that Mukhriz was removed as a measure to silence him as he was critical of 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

"That is his opinion (on 1MDB). We cannot prevent him from making statements."

Commenting on Mukhriz's statement in a press conference reminding him to *jangan lena* (not to fall asleep), he said the former could be referring to the video, which had since gone viral, showing him asleep during the recent investiture at Istana Anak Bukit.

"My eyes were closed but I was not sleeping. Sometimes, we can concentrate better when we close our eyes while listening to a speech. The video was edited."

Bashah said he had resigned as senator and deputy domestic trade, cooperatives and consumerism minister following his appointment as menteri besar.

On his plans for Kedah and whether there would be a change in the line-up of state executive councillors, he said: "I will reveal this after the swearing-in ceremony tomorrow (today)."

