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SILAT BODY'S SHOWDOWN

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SILAT BODY'S SHOWDOWN

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President, sec-gen will
meet SSC, federation
about wrongful removal

BY

A BATTLE is brewing within the silat fraternity, with sparks set to fly in a showdown on Saturday.

It follows the booting out of Singapore Silat Federation (Persisi) president Johari Mokti and secretary-general Saiful Nizam three weeks ago for allegedly failing to perform their duties satisfactorily.

But now it appears their ouster was illegal.

Replacements of such office holders can be done only through an extraordinary general meeting, which was not called.

Media reports have said Johari's predecessor, Abdullah Shafie Sidik, was appointed acting president in the wake of the developments.

But Johari told The Straits Times yesterday: "We are holding on to our positions.

"I have no further comment until Saturday's meeting with the association and the Singapore Sports Council (SSC)."

Ng Eng Soon, director of SSC's national sports management division said yesterday they are working with Persisi's management committee to resolve the issue.

But with the possibility of the SSC withholding funds because of the unconstitutional move, the opposition to Johari and Saiful could end, observers said.

Alternatively, members could call for an EOGM at the end of the month and vote for new members to fill the 18 positions in Persisi's management committee.

Its chief executive director Sheik Alau'ddin said he would comment only after Saturday's meeting.

When asked about reports that Abdullah had been appointed interim president, Sheik said they were untrue.

Johari, a full-time technician, beat then-incumbent Abdullah in Persisi's annual general meeting in June. Persisi staff have supposedly been unhappy over Johari's handling of affairs since then.

Things came to a head about three weeks ago, leading to the eventual ousting of Johari and Saiful, a doctor.

An insider disclosed: "There are about 30 to 40 matters that staff felt Saiful and Johari didn't do properly. Some are just administrative issues, but some others are quite major."

"They were seemingly inefficient in carrying out their duties. All these will come out on Saturday," the insider added.

But Johari and Saiful have the backing of some quarters within the SSC, who are seething at how Persisi has "made a mockery of its own constitution" with the "illegal" ouster.

Among the sanctions the SSC has at its disposal is the holding back of funding till Persisi gets its house in order.

This year, Persisi was allocated \$60,000 less than the \$1.1 million it got last year.

Other national sports associations have suffered similar fates recently because of internal problems.

These include Cuesports Singapore, where poor financial controls were uncovered in 2005; and the Singapore Rugby Union in 2005, the same year after the alleged embezzlement of over \$1 million by then-employee Sean Lee.

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