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Judul : Setya regains old post amid Dec. 2 anxiety
Tanggal : Kamis, 01 Desember 2016
Surat Kabar : Jakarta Post
Halaman : -

Political dynamics at the House of Representatives catapulted controversial senior politician and Golkar Party chairman Setya Novanto back into the House speaker post on Wednesday, amid concerns that a planned rally could take over the legislative compound and overthrow the government. After former speaker Ade Komarudin, who is also from Golkar, lost support from his party and other House factions, Setya's return as speaker was expected, but concerns about the rally accelerated the move. Setya, who is thought to have closer ties with President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, is believed to be more reliable in terms of mitigating risks from the protest planned by conservative Muslim groups for Friday. On Wednesday, a House plenary meeting dismissed Ade, although he was absent due to medical treatment abroad. Setya took his oath during the same session. "I will strengthen relations between lawmakers and other high state officials, particularly President Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo," Setya said after the meeting. Setya served as House speaker from 2014 until he was engulfed by a corruption scandal involving mining company PT Freeport Indonesia and was forced to resign in December last year. He then won the Golkar chairmanship, after which he declared the party a government supporter. In October, the Constitutional Court issued a ruling that helped clear him of the corruption charges. Setya's journey to regain the speakership was quite fast, occurring over just eight days after the Golkar central executive board decided to replace Ade. Only the Democratic Party questioned the hasty replacement during Wednesday's plenary. "We want to ask the party [Golkar] the reason behind the replacement. We don't know the reason, and our constituents keep asking us why. Can we know the reason?" Dems lawmaker Benny K. Harman said during the plenary session. "But principally, we appreciate the move, because it is Golkar's prerogative as regulated in the MD3 [Legislative Institutions] Law," he added. Political experts have said Setya could help Jokowi to strengthen his position in the House as the lawmaker has long been known for his political lobbying, which may be why he is "more trusted" than Ade. Ade tried until the last minute to keep his position. While undertaking medical treatment, he said he had asked Golkar secretary-general Idrus Marham to postpone the replacement. But Ade seems to have lost his political clout at the House. A day earlier, the House's ethics council dismissed him from his post, citing two ethical violations. "I will obey all party decisions because I obey its regulations," Ade said on Tuesday. Setya's return comes amid political turbulence after Jokowi revealed that political actors were suspected of exploiting the recent Nov. 4 rally, where 100,000 people from various Muslim groups staged a protest to demand the prosecution of Jakarta Governor Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama over alleged blasphemy. Ade was accused of failing to lobby the protesters and letting them occupy areas surrounding the House, although not within its gates, from night until dawn. The next rally is predicted to see around 200,000 protesters. Although National Police chief Gen. Tito Karnavian has said the mass may only gather at the National Monument, speculation is rife that certain groups will attempt to occupy the House. Aside from the Democratic Party, all other House factions expressed support for Setya. "We hope this is the last [replacement], because we want us [to work] together to improve legislative, monitoring and budgetary functions. We should end all political disputes to maintain political stability," Gerindra Party lawmaker Supratman Andi Agtas said. The ruling Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), meanwhile, may benefit from Setya's return through the revival of a plan to revise the MD3 Law and reformulate the composition of House leadership board, so that the party could gain a position on the board. "We hope the new speaker is willing to initiate the revision of the MD3 Law, because we have to appreciate the people who have elected us to be their representatives in the legislature," said PDI-P lawmaker Arya Bima.