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Pas supporters to join BN

MACHANG, Thurs. - Barisan Nasional's chances of winning the Pulai Chondong by-election received a big boost today when a group of Pas supporters pledged to join Umno and vote for the coalition's candidate.

The group was led by Mat Yaakob Mamat, a Pas member of the Kampung Maka branch, about 10km from Pulai Chondong.

The group, which claimed to have the support of 40 families in the village, made the pledge to Entrepreneur Development Minister and Umno supreme council member Datuk Mustapa Mohamed.

"I have been a devoted Pas member for more than 40 years, but now I realise the party is only full of talk.

"It has not been able to bring development to the people nor improve our standard of living," said Mat Yaakob.

The 60-year-old rubber tapper said he would convince other families to vote for BN candidate Yusoff Hamzah, who will face Pas' Zulkifli Mamat in a straight fight.

Polling day falls on Monday.

His niece, Raja Zabedah Raja Ibrahim, 55, said she decided to leave Pas as she could not tolerate the party's hypocrisy.

"On one hand, Pas talks about true Islamic principles but on the other hand, its leaders talk bad about others, declare Umno members as infidels and often boycott those who are not from the same party," she said.

"Pas is now at odds with everybody - Dr Mahathir, the Kelantan palace, the State administrative officers, Umno members and even among themselves."

Mat Yaakob's nephew, Mohamed Zainal, said he joined Umno for the sake of his children's future.

"If I continue to support Pas, I'll be jeopardising the future of my children and grandchildren.

"What's the point of supporting a party which cannot bring changes and improve our lives?

"Kelantan needs to develop at a greater pace. Under present circumstances, I do not believe Pas can do it," said the 47-year-old labourer.

In welcoming their decision to join Umno, Mustapa said their move was proof of the effectiveness of BN's positive approach. He hoped more Pas members would follow suit.

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