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Umno-Pas

PAS EXPECTED TO DEFER ISLAMIC STATE AMBITIONS, SAYS ZAMBRY

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 14 (Bernama) -- Umno Youth exco member Datuk Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir said today he expects Pas to postpone its ambition to establish an Islamic state owing to various factors, including the upcoming general election.

The global war on terror had forced PAS to portray a moderate image, he told a conference on Malaysian politics.

"The biggest question is the question of PAS' new line-up. The two top posts have never been contested. Behind-the-scene jostling is intense for the Number Two post to be vacated by (Datuk Seri) Abdul Hadi Awang, who is to be named as party president. There is no obvious Number Two," he said in a paper presented at the Malaysia Strategic Outlook 2003 Conference on "Political Outlook" here.

The one-day conference is organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI).

Zambry said the deepening crisis between the religious orthodoxy and the young professionals would boil over as they could not agree on methods and approaches with regard to the Islamic state issue and the stand on Malay unity.

Other factors include PAS' position on the question of fielding women as election candidates.

"The leadership has to overcome the resistance of the ulama headed by (Datuk) Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat," he said.

As far as Islamic policies are concerned, Zambry said the Barisan Nasional (BN) government would maintain its existing structure without falling into a structure type of conservative interpretation of Islam.

"Malaysia will continue to provide an exemplary model for the modern state without sacrificing the adherence to the fundamental teachings of Islam," he said.

On Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is to take over from Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Prime Minister, Zambry said: "Pak Lah will govern by consensus. Pak Lah will listen to divergence of voices and will sparingly show his steely resolve."

-- BERNAMA

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