

PAS No 2: Nasharuddin out, Mat Sabu in?
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Although PAS party elections are only slated for June, tongues have started wagging about a number of notable names said to be jostling for the coveted post of deputy president.

Party sources said the polls will be quite interesting as a few surprises are in store over the purported latent rivalry between two groups - the 'unity government' faction and the 'Erdogan' group.

The label 'unity government' is often used to denote those in favour of cooperating with Umno for the sake of Malay solidarity.

The Erdoganites are those who eschew such rapprochement and prefer consolidating ties with the opposition Pakatan Rakyat coalition.

The group takes its name from Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's prime minister and leader of his country's centrist Islamist party.

According some sources, deputy president Nasharuddin Mat Isa (left) will not be contesting the position he has held for two terms.

Others, however, allege "a different story", namely that the 'unity government' within PAS do not want Nasharuddin anymore and have chosen vice-president Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man.

"There's nobody else (who can replace Nasharuddin) other than Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man," a source said.

The proposal follows the increasing popularity of Tuan Ibrahim, who received the most votes in the tussle for vice-president in 2009.

Nasha out, Mat Sabu in?

Tuan Ibrahim is speculated to be slated to fill the position of deputy president as part of moves to realise the party's long-cherished concept of 'leadership by ulama'.

Meanwhile, those close to Nasharuddin said no decision has been made as to whether or not he will defend his post.

"He has not made known his stand... No decision," a source told Malaysiakini.

In the party elections two years ago, Nasharuddin successfully defended the deputy presidency after defeating two vice-presidents: Husam Musa and Mohamad Sabu (right).

Nasharuddin got 480 votes, Husam, 281 and Mohamad, 26.

Mohamad Sabu, according to yet other sources, is expected to take another shot at the No 2 post this year.

But Mohamad, who is also Penang PAS deputy commissioner, declined to indicate whether

or not he was interested in the post.

"I have not decided yet. I'm still discussing with my friends. I'll see the situation first," said the popular PAS figure, when contacted.

Husam gives way

Quarters close to Husam claimed he is not likely to go for deputy president, but may settle for contesting a seat in the central committee.

This is because, said husam musa pas announce contest of number 2 post 250509 02 one source, Husam (right) wants to give way to Mohamad Sabu - who seems to lean against a unity government with leading BN component party Umno - and to make way for a two-way contest.

Political observers are of the opinion that among the factors that led to Nasharuddin's win was the tiff between Husam and Mohamad Sabu.

The source said other figures 'invited' to join the tussle for the No 2 post include vice-president Salahudin Ayub and central committee members Abu Bakar Chik and Azizan Abdul Razak.

It remains unclear, however, whether these three personalities - said to be in favour of a 'unity government' - will in fact be in the running this time.

PAS annual muktamar (meeting) is scheduled to be held from June 3-5 at Taman Melewar, Kuala Lumpur.

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