

PAS rejuvenates state team in bid to wrest back T'ganu
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ANALYSIS In a bid to wrest back Terengganu from BN, the PAS state leadership has undergone a total make-over, replacing the old guards with new faces in a move to recover the support of young voters who will be the kingmakers in the next general election.

Abdul Wahid EndutThe new line-up announced by new state commissioner Mohd Abdul Wahid Endut (left) last Saturday was seen as an aggressive move to shake up the party in the state, which had been in a dormant mood since its appalling defeat in 2004.

Consisting of leaders mostly in their 40s and 50s, the new state 'cabinet' will drive Terengganu PAS out of the shadows of familiar faces such as national president Abdul Hadi Awang, secretary-general Mustafa Ali, former state commissioner Harun Taib, Abu Bakar Chik and Wan Mutalib Wan Embong.

Only Abu Bakar and Hadi were reappointed into the new line-up as state committee member and advisor respectively.

Abdul Wahid, the 54-year-old businessman who captured the Kuala Terengganu parliamentary seat from Umno in a by-election in January 2009, admitted that the senior figures in their 60s are no longer in the front line to fight the next election.

"I want a younger team. It is just like a football team, (we need young players) to chase and tackle the ball," he said when contacted recently.

'Also the demand of the grassroots'

He said that this is also the demand of the party grassroots who are of the view that the senior leaders cannot attract young voters.

PAS shocked the nation in the 1999 general election, winning 28 out of 32 state seats in the east coast state.

kuala terengganu by election 170109 victory paradeHowever, the PAS state government only lasted for one term before its seats dropped sharply to four in 2004 general election. During the 'political tsunami' in 2008 when the opposition won five state governments, Terengganu PAS only increased its state seats by two.

Abdul Wahid had named Saiful Bahri Mamat, Muhyidin Abdul Rashid dan Bukit Tunggal state assemblyperson Dr Alias Razak as deputy commissioners, together with 22 new state committee members.

Saiful, 46, who was reappointed into the post of deputy commissioner, is a young cleric who graduated from Al-Azhar University in Egypt, while Muhyidin is a businessman and former state treasurer of the party.

Alias is a medical doctor and three-term state assemblyperson.

Yahaya Ali was retained as secretary and is assisted by Kamarudin Yunus, Hanafiah Mat and Zakaria Dagang. The new treasurer, publicity chief and election director are M Shukrimun Shamsudin, Nik Muhammad Zawawi Salleh and Ariffin Deraman.

Among the 10 committee members are Mohd Khazani Abdullah, Dr Azman Ibrahim, Zarani Othman and Dr Syed Azman Syed Ahmad Nawawi (ex officio).

Khazani is said to be one of Hadi's confidantes while Azman is a dentist who operates his own clinic in Setiu.

Khazani is an academician-turned-businessman and Zarina is an activist in the PAS Muslimat (women's wing).

Likened to Umno post-1999

Some political pundits likened the new team to that Umno after the latter's electoral hammering in 1999. Umno then picked Idris Jusoh to replace former menteri besar Wan Mokhtar Ahmad and Idris managed to regain the state after five years.

However, Abdul Wahid denied that the old guards have been marginalised, arguing that they are just playing different a role.

"We did not abandon the senior leaders. They are retained but not in the front line. They are given tasks in term of providing tactics and advice," he said.

"I notice that the new faces are more dynamic in carrying out their work."

The new state committee, stressed Abdul Wahid, is a combination of young clerics, political activists and professionals.

ahmad said and terengganuAlthough his new crew is yet to be tested in the battlefield, it is not impossible that it could repeat the 1999 victory if an effective strategy is used. More so when Terengganu Menteri Besar Ahmad Said is still struggling hard to resolved the long simmering feud among different factions in Terengganu Umno.