

**'No response' on PSM application to join Pakatan
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By Lee Way Loon**

Targeting the end of federal rule by the BN, Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) last year submitted an application to join Pakatan Rakyat, but is yet to get a response.

PSM secretary-general S Arutchelvan (right) said the party had verbally informed Pakatan of its decision last June, and followed this up with a formal application three months later.

"Standing with Pakatan to fight BN was our previous stand. But due to requests from the people, we decided to join them," he said.

Arutchelvan added that PSM was open to Pakatan deciding on whether the opposition pact preferred to remain with the current ally relationship or accept PSM as one of its component parties.

However, Pakatan has yet to respond to this, but has promised to discuss the issue at its next leadership council meeting, he told a press conference today, at which PSM also released its manifesto for the coming general election.

Also present were party president Nasir Hashim, deputy president M Sarasvathy and Sungai Siput MP Dr M Jeyakumar Devaraj.

PSM in its manifesto makes it clear that it will support Pakatan candidates in the 13th general election.

Apart from that, the manifesto says PSM is ready to use a common logo with the Pakatan parties, if there is one, in the coming general election.

"PSM endorses Pakatan's manifesto and Buku Jingga. PSM will also retain its own manifesto.

"If the election pact cannot materialise for some reason, PSM will still continue to support Pakatan candidates in all constituencies, except in those that PSM will also be contesting," reads the manifesto.

'Avoid multi-cornered fights at all costs'

However, Arutchelvan quickly added that the question of multi-cornered fights did not arise as seat negotiations with Pakatan were still going on.

He refused to speculate as to whether there would be any multi-cornered fight if PSM failed get the seats that it wanted.

PSM aims to re-contest the four seats that it battled for in the 2008 general election - the Sungai Siput parliamentary seat in Perak and three state seats - Kota Damansara and Semenyih in Selangor and Jelapang in Perak.

It went on to win the Sungai Siput and Kota Damansara seats.

However, the socialist party is apparently at odds with its ally DAP over the Jelapang state seat.

The seat saw a three-cornered fight in the last election, in which the DAP candidate Hee Yit Foong beat the PSM and MCA candidates. However, Hee quit DAP to become a BN-friendly Independent assemblyperson during the Perak crisis of 2009.

Asked what would happen if PSM failed to get the seat from DAP, Arutchelvan said, "We will seek the opinion from members of the public."

PSM lists six areas it will struggle for in its manifesto, which is themed "Enough! Reject 56 years of Umno-BN."

These are:

- (1) Job guarantees, reasonable and fair wages;
- (2) Free and good quality public education and health systems;
- (3) Local council and village committee elections;
- (4) Effective and cheap public transport;
- (5) Permanent and adequate housing for the lower income group; and
- (6) Environmental conservation through sustainable developments that prioritise human well-being and a well-balanced ecosystem.

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