Is Sarawak BN in trouble?
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ANALYSIS Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP) and Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) for the past three years have been saddled with internal bickering that not only threatens to tear the parties apart but also undermine the chances of the Sarawak BN in the forthcoming state election.

Expressing concern over this, recently appointed Sarawak Chief Minister Adenan Satem came up with a formula to solve the problems affecting the two parties.

For the SPDP, Adenan arranged a meeting between the party leadership and the four state assemblypersons sacked from SPDP.

Known as the G4, the group comprises Peter Nansian (Tasik Biru), Sylvester Entri (Marudi), Paulus Gumbang (Batu Danau) and Rosy Yunus (Bekenu). The four were expelled in November 2011 and have remained partyless since.

Yesterday, SPDP president William Mawan Ikom resigned from the party.

In March this year, during a courtesy call on Adenan, Mawan (right) agreed to take back the four in order to strengthen not only SPDP but also BN.

But Mawan's action triggered mass protests from the party leaders, including his deputy and the MP for Bintulu Tiong King Sing.

"Because of my action, there is a mutiny in SPDP against my leadership, and I am pushed out of SPDP. They elbowed me out," he told a media conference announcing his resignation from the party he established 12 years ago. He then went on to join Parti Tenaga Rakyat Sarawak (Teras).

Likewise, Adenan tried to solve the internal problem brewing in SUPP since after the state election in 2011, in which SUPP lost 13 out of the 19 state seats it contested.

The 13 are Chinese majority seats. SUPP won only two Chinese seats there but took four Dayak seats .

Following the defeat, SUPP decided to stay out ofAbdul Taib Mahmud's cabinet, but Wong Soon Koh, one of the elected Chinese candidates, went against that decision

This is how the crisis started, and it worsened when Wong (right), chairperson of the

SUPP Sibu branch, tried to challenge Peter Chin for the post of president in December 2011.

However, Wong and five of the state assemblypersons boycotted the triennial general meeting (TGM) and party elections claiming irregularities in 14 branch elections.

From then, the crisis has deepene and remains seemingly unsolvable. Wong, Johnichal Rayong (Engkilili assemblyperson), Jerip Susil (Bengoh) and Ranum Mina (Opar) decided to quit SUPP and join Teras.

Apparently, the chief minister had given the nod to their move.

Will BN grow stronger or weaker?

Now with William and Wong joining Teras together with eight other state assemblypersons and one MP, will the state BN be strengthened or weakened?

It all depends how Adenan, who is also the chairperson of the state BN handles the whole issue, said a political observer.

He said If Adenan (left) is too pro-Teras and allows it to be a member of BN just because of the presence of 10 elected reps, including Mawan and Wong and the MP for Baram Anyie Ngau, then he is going to deal with a bigger problem posed by SPDP and SUPP which are still members of the state and federal BN.

As a newly appointed chief minister, Adenan cannot afford to antagonise SUPP as the party has the support of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.
Nor can he afford to sideline SPDP, as its deputy president Tiong King Sing has links with Umno leaders, including the premier.

The defections of these leaders may solve SPDP and SUPP's internal problems in, but their defections will create more, and even bigger, problems for Adenan and BN.

Adenan must realise that his position in Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) is not that stable after he was chosen by the former chief minister Abdul Taib Mahmud in Feb 28 this year to replace him over more senior party leaders, such as deputy president Alfred Jabu Anak Numpang, deputy president II Abang Johari Tun Openg and Awang Tengah Ali Hassan.

There are now cliques within PBB waiting for the next PBB triennial general meeting.

Adenan has no party grassroots support and for that reason, he cannot afford to have so many problems, especially in dealing with SPDP, SUPP and even Teras.

"It is going to be tricky, even if BN allows Teras to fight SPDP and SUPP under the so-called BN-Plus, a formula used by BN to settle the quarrel between Sarawak National Party (Snap) and Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) in the 1983 state elections.

"Under this formula, the two parties fought each other in the constituencies that had been allocated to Snap.

"But towards the end of the campaign period, the then CM Taib Mahmud gave his backing to PBDS, and this caused a big row with Snap," said an observer.

Numerous seats at stake

Adenan can also support any of the parties. However, he must remember that at stake will be 27 seats - 19 seats are likely to be fought between SUPP and Teras, and eight others will be vied for by SPDP and Teras.

"In the free for all, who will benefit? You must not forget the strong presence of DAP, particularly in the urban constituencies, and PKR in the rural areas," said the observer.

Currently, DAP controls 12 urban seats, while PKR has one urban seat and two in rural constituencies.

For example, in Bawang Assan where Wong is the incumbent, there is likely to be a three-cornered fight (Teras, SUPP and DAP). While BN supporters will be spread between SUPP and Teras, DAP on the other hand will have solid support. The previous election results revealed DAP's strength.

Another constituency in danger is Senadin, where SUPP won with a 58-vote majority.

As for Mawan in Pakan, he, too, may have a tough fight. For the past three elections, his majority has been sliding.

What will happen if a highly credible candidate were to challenge him?

Peter Nansian, who is likely to be a Teras candidate in Tasik Biru, is also expected to be caught in a dilemma after being expelled from SPDP, and so is Sylvester Entri in Marudi. In both constituencies, SPDP has readied candidates to defend the seats.

Judging by these political scenarios, it looks like the Sarawak BN is in for a rough ride in the coming state election, which must be held by the middle of 2016.

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