

## **PAS nudges Pakatan to brink of destruction?**

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ANALYSIS PAS' statement yesterday that its party representatives would not sign statutory declarations supporting Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as the new Selangor menteri besar has once again ruffled feathers and caused unhappiness among its Pakatan Rakyat partners.

In a central committee meeting yesterday, PAS decided to leave the appointment to the Selangor ruler, dampening PKR's ambition to present a strong case to the sultan to approve Wan Azizah.

Under increasing pressure from its conservative faction, and from PKR that had wanted the support letters, PAS chose the middle path and refrained from making any significant decisions.

But this has not helped its relationship with Pakatan partners.

Already being seen as having dragged its feet in the MB saga by backing Abdul Khalid Ibrahim to stay on before finally supporting the move to replace Khalid on Aug 17, PAS, in a central committee meeting yesterday, again appeared reluctant to back Wan Azizah.

DAP had been left unimpressed to the extent that Selangor chief Tony Pua said the state DAP had discussed in an emergency meeting as to whether Pakatan should continue to exist.

This is not the first time PAS has irked its Pakatan partners in recent times, with a possible Pakatan split being mooted.

Its attempts to push through hudud law in Kelantan earlier this year did not impress DAP either, with DAP's Sarawak chapter threatening to sever ties with Pakatan in the state.

Since the conclusion of the general election last year, PAS had expressed concern of losing Malay support while gaining on non-Malay support, which signalled a shift in the party as the voice of the conservative faction, many of whom are inclined to the idea of a unity government with Umno, grew louder.

Anwar and Hadi not on the same page

PAS, however, is not winning brownie points at either side of the political divide due to its inconsistency.

After initially backing Khalid to remain as MB before overturning that decision, the conduct of the party had also drawn criticism from Umno and other right-wing Malay groups, who

had used the opportunity to once again assert that PAS is subservient and follows the wishes of its partners.

Central to this is the apparent inability of PKR de facto leader and opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim to bring together the three coalition partners to unanimously agree on an issue, as he had done since the formation of Pakatan.

Anwar had been for years touted as the only glue that kept the three partners together, but the voices in PAS that are critical of Anwar had grown louder at the grassroots level.

The MB crisis, for one, had demonstrated a lack of understanding between Anwar and PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang on a crucial issue, as the latter publicly backed Khalid to remain as MB.

Anwar had reminded PKR delegates at the party congress not to question PAS' role in Pakatan as he attempted to keep the coalition glued together.

The formation of the coalition remains crucial for Pakatan's ambition to reach Putrajaya and more so for PKR's own political survival.

DAP and PAS had both been standalone parties in the past, and have performed well in their respective hunting grounds - DAP in non-Malay areas and PAS in the Malay heartlands in Kelantan and Terengganu.

However, the seats PKR aimed for often overlapped with PAS' demands and a fallout from the coalition could hurt PKR the most, provided PAS is content with their limited political influence in the East Coast Malay belt.

Right after GE 13, Pakatan had aimed to work harder to win Putrajaya in GE 14, which is not due by 2016 the earliest.

But now there are growing concerns as to whether Pakatan would still remain intact in time for the next general election.

The Selangor crisis had also ignited an internal battle in PAS, with the conservative and progressive factions at loggerheads.

With Pakatan busy fighting its internal demons, BN is sitting back and enjoying the fireworks, wondering if their nemesis would self-destruct.

Selangor crisis today

11.50am: Fearing snap polls, DAP reveals that it discussed the possibility of a Pakatan break up in an emergency meeting last night.

2.39pm: Selangor sultan has an audience with Khalid.

3.33pm: PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang's office denies that he had offered PKR deputy president Azmin Ali the MB post if Azmin backs a PAS-Umno unity government.

4.42pm: Palace accepts Khalid resignation as MB, pending appointment of a replacement. The ruler also asks for more than two MB nominees each from each Pakatan party.

5.57pm: Selangor PAS says sultan's decree for multiple candidates in in line with Abdul Hadi's view.

10.29pm: PKR and DAP say they will only submit Wan Azizah's name as in 2013, the palace sought four names and was given only one.

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