

PAS still shocked by Hadi's 'barua' speech

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COMMENT Before the muktamar, PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang had heated up the fire and the water in the PAS cauldron over the Selangor menteri besar saga was already boiling.

Then the muktamar started on Thursday, and just when they expected the hot water to jump out of the pot and scald the party, Hadi's presidential speech seemed to have somewhat cooled things down.

What many do not know is that that the president's speech had gone through many fire fighters before it was presented.

In fact, some parts were written by Erdogan factions, who had been at odds with Hadi, while the rest was written by other central committee members.

The night before the speech was given, the central committee had a pre-council meet and ironed out any possibility of Hadi stoking the fire again.

So, the next morning, Hadi gave the speech and it was perceived as an anti-climax, for many had expected walkouts and jeering as during the deputy president's and delegates' speeches.

But, at the winding-up on Saturday in Johor, Hadi shocked the muktamar with the words of "barua" and "broker" blasted at the two PAS assemblymen - Saari Sungib and Hasbullah Ridzwan.

They had given PKR President Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (left) the majority in the Selangor state assembly. Hadi also condemned fellow coalition parties DAP and PKR left and right.

The party has been divided since Hadi, with the backing of the ulama faction, had initially supported Khalid Ibrahim as the Selangor MB, then rejected Wan Azizah, even to the point of saying a PAS assemblyman should get the post. This was despite according to the majority held in the state assembly, PKR had the right to it.

That was when even his own supporters in the party's central committee, who had throughout the muktamar worked on calming down the factions, realised that "he was already too sick to be a leader".

Strongman shocked

One of Hadi's strongmen was shocked that such words came out in public, consciously

delivered, from the mouth of one who has been seen to be a religious scholar first rather than a politician.

(The word "barua' in the Malay language has a very strong connotation to lackeys carrying out the worst of crimes for a pittance.)

"These are the words from the president, who once upon a time, got such compliments from our spiritual leader Nik Aziz (Nik Mat) who said Hadi's speeches should be Friday sermons. And this time, his speech seemed to be full of spite, is this what a Friday sermon should be like?

"This will be talked about for years to come - the time when a PAS president, an ulama, tarnished his image, all for a post which does not even belong to the party," said the long-time supporter of Hadi.

"I never expected him to say it. How are we to cover up for him now? How do we even do damage control? Even the non-Muslim leaders of Pakatan never use such words to describe those they do not agree with," said a cleric from PAS.

He further said his cleric friends in PAS also said that if he had said it in a fit of anger, they could defend him.

"But this was written on paper, he had time to realise that what he said is almost irrefragable. He must be very sick that he cannot control his emotions. Only God knows," said the cleric.

All those interviewed, however, say they still want to be in the party despite what the president said. Thus the request for anonymity.

"We in PAS are different. The president is not the party and if he is 'tired', we will ask him to go 'nicely'," said an Erdogan leader.

'Not advised properly'

Muslimats in PAS say they have been keeping quiet and observing everything, not wanting to be with any side.

Those interviewed said Hadi must have not been "advised properly".

"That last speech by Hadi, proved to me that Selangor MB's post means so much to him, to the extent he is willing to bury his image with Pakatan. Now, we have to go out and face our non-Muslim voters and explain to them why Hadi did not behave the way a Muslim leader should. What is it with the position, it is not like the prime minister's post," said one Muslimat delegate.

"Now, we hope he will come to his senses and retire gracefully. The problem is how we are

going to convince him that what he did was wrong, for all this while, we looked up to Hadi as the one with the knowledge," said the longtime supporter.

One longtime PAS member said the fact that Hadi used such strong words against his own party members who insisted they did so to keep the state with the opposition, was because Hadi already knew that PAS was not going to get the MB's post.

"They (the media) said that our PAS state assemblymen have been interviewed but then the rumours are strong that the most likely candidate is PKR's Azmin Ali.

"If PAS had indeed gotten the post, do you think Hadi would be in a such a foul mood at the winding-up?" suggested the Kelantanese who has been with PAS for two decades now.

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