

Analyst: PAS may go moderate come GE14

MalaysiaKini.com

May 30, 2015

By Kow Gah Chie

A political analyst said there is a possibility of PAS and DAP closing ranks to fight the next general election as the Islamic party may try to shed its extremist image ahead of the polls.

"PAS (leaders) has taken a very conservative stand in the party elections to be held next week," said political analyst Low Chee Chong.

"But it will need to face voters after that. PAS will have to adopt a moderate stand to attract non-Muslim voters, particularly in Selangor, Perak and Johor," he said at a forum to remember the 'Tiananmen Square Massacre' last night.

Citing Britain's Labour party, which took power in late 90s, Low said the left-wing party moved to the centre to win support.

Likewise, DAP may continue to work with its Pakatan ally at the nationwide polls, which must be held by 2018, said the former PKR deputy treasurer.

While arguing that it is still possible for both parties to patch up their differences, Low conceded it would be nevertheless difficult for PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng to reconcile after harsh words were hurled at each other.

The rift between Pakatan was sparked by PAS' opposition to PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail's bid to replace Khalid Ibrahim as Selangor menteri besar early last year.

DAP eventually severed ties with Hadi after he submitted a private member's bill to Parliament to widen Syariah Court's jurisdiction - a move to allow Kelantan to implement hudud.

GST and 1MDB

Despite the upheaval in Pakatan, two recent by-elections - Rompin and Permatang Pauh - saw a drop in BN's support, a sign of voters' dissatisfaction with the ruling party.

BN was able to hold on to its Rompin stronghold but its majority was slashed by 40 percent, while Umno was unable to make much headway in Permatang Pauh.

"The Goods and Service Tax (GST) and 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) will continue to impact BN in the coming polls," said Low.

While the government has taken pains to stress that GST would see a one-off spike in inflation, Low opined that inflation will continue to worsen.

"The rakyat will feel the pinch as their pockets are empty," he said.

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