

Mat Sabu cheers chance of new political party

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By Susan Loone

The possibility of banker Nazir Abdul Razak forming a new non-partisan political party to reach out to all races is cheerful news to former PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu.

"Wonderful! This is good news. We will be watching the development of this new party," Mohamad, who is widely known as Mat Sabu, told reporters in Butterworth today.

"This means there are problems in Umno that make it necessary to form a new party," he added.

Mat Sabu was responding to a report in Asia Sentinel today that Nazir (photo), the younger brother of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, was planning the move.

According to the Hong Kong-based news portal, the new party seeks to "dramatically redraw the country's political landscape" and put an end to divisive racial politics.

Asia Sentinel claimed that Nazir, who heads CIMB Bank, has approached former deputy education minister Saifuddin Abdullah to lead the new party.

The formation of a new party sounds enticing amid the collapse of Pakatan Rakyat, and the intense bickering between former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Najib.

Mat Sabu was also asked about his own political future, and whether he was planning to join a new political set-up like PasMa (Persatuan Ummah Sejahtera Malaysia) - an NGO linked to disgruntled PAS members.

'I am still a PAS member'

He merely replied that "discussions are going on".

Asked if he would leave PAS after the party delegates rejected professionals and pro-Pakatan leaders like him, Mat Sabu smiled, saying, "I am still a PAS member."

As to whether DAP's declaration that "Pakatan Rakyat is dead" truly spelled the end of the opposition coalition, he said: "That is DAP's view and I am sure PAS will also have its own stand. This you will have to ask the new leadership as I am now just an ordinary member.

"Although such declarations are made, on the ground, friendship among members of Pakatan parties will continue on a personal level."

However, Mat Sabu said, efforts must be made to reconcile the party to fight BN and Umno in the coming general election, which will be called by 2018.

"We have previous experience that we will go nowhere if we stand alone," he said.

He was referring to the 2008 general election, in which Pakatan captured five states, and in 2013, garnered 52 percent of the popular votes against BN's 48 percent.

Mat Sabu was at the sessions court in Butterworth today to attend a defamation case brought against him for allegedly uttering disparaging remarks against the policemen involved in the Bukit Kepong communist attack in the 1950s.

Mat Sabu is charged with making the offensive remarks at a ceramah in Tasek Gelugor in August 2011. The judge has fixed July 8 to deliver the decision on the matter.

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