

Nik Aziz rules out PAS-Umno collaboration
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Beh Lih Yi

PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat has strongly ruled out any form of collaboration with Umno in the wake of intense speculations the two rival parties are involved in a series of secret talks.

MCPX

nik aziz interview in kota bharu 130608 03Nik Aziz, who has just returned from his 13-day umrah pilgrimage on Monday, said he was not aware of the PAS-Umno talks taking place and stressed that he will not agree to such a move on the basis of its "bitter" lesson learned during the brief collaboration with Umno in the 1970s.

He however said he has no problem if party leaders were to talk to "individuals" from Umno.

"We had joined Barisan Nasional previously, we were close to Umno but we got kicked out. Umno looked for PAS when it was weak after the May 13 incident but once it is strong again, it will 'bite' PAS," the 77-year-old spiritual leader told Malaysiakini in Kelantan yesterday.

"I will say it clearly that I don't agree we talk to Umno, but talking to individuals from Umno, it doesn't matter. Talking to the party (officially), no," stressed Nik Aziz, who was religiously donned in a white jubah (long robe) and kopiah (scull cap) for the interview with Malaysiakini.

Asked to elaborate on the 'permissible talks with Umno individuals', he explained: "We are not asking them to defect. If they want to support or join PAS, they are merely coming back to the basic (of an Islamic party)."

Once bitten, twice shy

nik aziz interview in kota bharu 130608 02The interview, which was initially slated to be held at the menteri besar's office was moved to his modest house in Pulau Melaka (left), which is about a 20-minute drive away from the state's capital Kota Bahru as he was not well.

Nik Aziz, who is fondly called the 'tok guru', has come down with flu after his return from the umrah (minor haj) with his family.

He appeared frail and soft spoken at the beginning but was in high spirits and cracked jokes at the later part of the interview.

He also said he has never fallen ill after performing his umrah before, attributing the illness this time around to the frequent change of weather in Mecca.

Nik Aziz's comment came on top of intense rumours that Umno has extended its olive branch to PAS again in the name of collaborating for the sake of 'Malay unity' after BN's humiliating setback in the March 8 general election.

nik aziz interview in kota bharu 120608 02 Certain leaders within PAS were said to be rather keen on the idea, causing much uneasiness with their opposition allies in Pakatan Rakyat which is ambitious to seize power at the federal level through possible defections from BN parliamentarians.

PAS had joined BN in 1973 but the brief collaboration ended in 1978 after a leadership tussle.

Subsequently, it lost Kelantan to Umno and it wasn't until 1990 that the Islamic party wrested back its crown jewel.

Nik Aziz, who wield significant influence in PAS as the most respected religious scholar, reminded party members that it should not be 'bitten twice' by Umno.

"I have mentioned a few times that I was bitter when Umno kicked us out. We can't do the same thing twice," said the veteran politician.

The PAS leader also noted that he could not accept collaborating with Umno because the biggest ruling party is against Islamic teachings by separating religion and politics.

"As long as Umno is secular, I can't accept... (To separate religion and politics) can be the policy in Christianity and Buddhism, that's their policy. We have what is being advocated in Islam," he said.

He claimed Umno leaders "will not reach heaven in the hereafter" over this.

No need to ban Islam Hadhari

Nik Aziz said the Islam Hadhari concept - or Islamic civilisation - mooted by Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and promoted by Umno was one reason why PAS could not work with it.

"Islam hadhari is nonsense ... so we can't talk to the current Umno because it is promoting the wrong, deviant teachings."

nik aziz interview in kota bharu 120608 01 Despite being critical of Islam Hadhari, Nik Aziz however held a different view with the Selangor state government - which has banned discussion on Islam Hadhari recently - saying that there was no need to do so.

Instead of banning the discussion, said Nik Aziz, what should be done is to educate the people through the Quran on why Islam Hadhari is not accepted.

"There is no need to ban. If they (Selangor state government) want to ban, that is their way, we can't stop," he said.

Selangor executive councillor for Islamic matters Dr Hasan Mohamed Ali, who is from PAS, announced two weeks ago that the state will not allow discussion on Islam Hadhari in the future as he said Islam has never changed since it was practised long time ago.