

Nasharuddin denies holding secret meetings with Najib
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PAS deputy president Nasharuddin Mat Isa today denied holding secret meetings with Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to discuss possible collaborations between PAS and Umno.
MCPX

parliament 2008 first day 280408 nasharuddinHe said he had not met Najib, also the Umno deputy president, in London or elsewhere - contrary to recent rumours that he has allegedly acted on personal capacity to talk to Umno leader and had been offered position.

"I was in London to attend a seminar on governance organised by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association as a Malaysian Parliament representative.

"There was no meeting with the deputy prime minister in London or elsewhere," Nasharuddin, who is also the Bachok MP, told a press conference today at the Parliament lobby which was held to clarify the speculations.

"The reports in the mainstream media that I have held secret meetings with the deputy premier in London is irresponsible, unethical and (of) defamatory (nature)," he added.

Hadi: PAS aware of Umno's tactic

Nasharuddin also read out a one-page statement signed by party president Abdul Hadi Awang during the press conference, which among others, strongly ruled out a PAS-Umno collaboration.

"Any such allegation or proposal has been denied by PAS top leadership (as we) acknowledge our recent electoral victory represents the people's wish to see PAS to be with Pakatan Rakyat," read the statement.

The statement added that PAS was committed to strengthen Pakatan and argued that the speculation was part of the efforts to cause anxiety among opposition leaders.

pas umno general election 021104"PAS is very much aware of why Umno or BN is using this tactic (as) they are in a situation dealing with numerous internal leadership crises and facing the people's anger over the rise of fuel prices and inflation," the statement added.

Asked on whether he agreed with any member-to-member level talk between Umno and PAS, Nasharuddin said that has been "ongoing" for a long time.

"You can see very obviously in Parliament or other public areas where our MPs do talk and communicate with any political organisation whether with Umno, MCA, MIC or political organisations from overseas, it's nothing new," he said.

He did not deny this unofficial talk was part of the efforts to get Umno members to defect to PAS.

"Talks and discussions can come in many topics, one of that could be (to get them to defect)," said Nasharuddin.

Also present at the press conference was PAS secretary-general Kamaruddin Jaffar, Youth chief Salahuddin Ayub and other PAS MPs.

Mustafa Ali also denies involvement

Nasharuddin's clarification today was said to be prompted by a number of PAS leaders who have urged him to clear the air openly at the party's central working committee meeting last night.

When asked, secretary-general Kamaruddin said the party's leadership last night decided that it wanted to "put the matter to rest".

pas and mafrel meeting 031207 hadi awang and mustafa aliAnother PAS leader who was implicated in the secret talks with Umno, party strategist and veteran Mustafa Ali (photo: right), has also denied to Malaysiakini earlier that he was involved in the talks or that he had been offered any position.

A high-ranking PAS leader, who requested for anonymity and who was present at the central working committee last night, however said the matter of PAS-Umno collaboration was still being hotly debated among the top leadership.

According to him, the party president will be travelling to London soon to attend a conference involving other Islamic groups and would seek advice will be sought from an influential Islamic party 'Muslim Brotherhood' regarding this subject.

The source said part of the reason that PAS was considering the possibility of working with Umno was triggered by PKR's ongoing attempt to get BN's Sabah and Sarawak party leaders - majority of whom are non-Muslims- to join Pakatan.

If that happens, it may 'dilute' PAS' influence within the opposition alliance in relation to Malay-Islamic issues.

"As a major Islamic group, we have to consider all options," the source told Malaysiakini.

An evasive Najib

Meanwhile, Najib, when asked at a separate press conference held at the Parliament lobby today, appeared evasive to respond although he was pressed twice on the issue.

najib pc at parliament 260608"I don't need to answer any question like that," he told reporters when asked on whether there was any talks between PAS and Umno.

Pressed on whether he ever met Nasharuddin overseas, the deputy premier ignored the question and turned to other journalists saying: "Any other question?"

There have been rumours in recent months that both Umno and PAS were stitching a secret deal in a move which would eventually see PAS being absorbed into BN.

The basis of such talks were said to be built on the grounds of strengthening the Malay unity and also to strengthen BN which is increasingly facing pressure from the Anwar Ibrahim-led Pakatan Rakyat.

PAS is presently an ally of PKR and together with DAP, formed the Pakatan Rakyat coalition which presently ruled five states.

The Pakatan coalition has also denied the BN its much savoured two-thirds majority in Parliament in the last general election.

Yesterday PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat reportedly said he would not be holding any meeting with Umno leaders to prevent fissures within PAS.

He said any negotiation with Umno would only disunite PAS because some members would not agree to it.

Nik Aziz had earlier told Malaysiakini that he was against a pact between PAS and Umno.

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