

**Pakatan leaders unperturbed by PAS-Umno talks**  
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Pakatan Rakyat leaders brushed aside speculations of PAS leaving the opposition alliance for Barisan Nasional and stressed that the MCPX talks the Islamic party had with Umno were not a "cause for concern".

The leaders were more inclined to believe the crossover speculations were part of an elaborate plan to destabilise Pakatan and conceal Umno's own internal problems.

lim guan eng pc 270608 "If one meeting can break up Pakatan Rakyat then it's not a people's alliance anymore," ridiculed DAP secretary-general and Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

He said mere discussions between two parties did not constitute a collaboration, and pointed out to the various dialogues Penang has had with the Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Anyway, Pakatan Rakyat is ready "to cross the bridge if it at all comes to a break-up", he said.

"But at the moment there is no indications for such worries," Lim told a media conference during a break at the inaugural meeting of the first sitting of 12th Penang state assembly in Georgetown today.

"The more important thing is what has been discussed," he said, adding that DAP would not participate in partisan talks.

"If we were to talk with MCA or Gerakan, the DAP would not discuss about Chinese unity.

"We will press on the bigger and meaningful subject of Malaysian unity and other pressing national issues.

"Malaysian unity is current aspiration of all people," he stressed, hinting that it was time for all political parties to abandon their race-based stance and adopt a multi-racial approach.

He also ruled out that DAP would talk to PAS about its dialogues with Umno. He said it was "unnecessary and not going to disrupt Penang government anyway."

**'It's unthinkable'**

Meanwhile, Penang PKR chief Zahrain Mohamed Hashim shared the sentiment that PAS were unlikely to join BN and said that it was just hype generated by the government-controlled media.

He believed the party's principles and grassroots base will not allow Islamic party to join BN.

"How could PAS jump ship to BN and collaborate with Umno?"

"It's unthinkable. I can't believe it can ever happen," he told malaysiakini, after attending the assembly official opening by the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Abdul Rahman Abbas.

"It is an impression created by the BN-controlled media to divert our attention from Umno's political upheaval," said the Bayan Baru MP.

Umno and PAS have been in three rounds of talks on Malay-Muslim issues, raising speculations that the Islamic party would ditch Pakatan Rakyat and join BN in near future.

However, many grassroots political leaders across the northern region, including from Umno, brushed aside such notion, and indeed hinted "it could well be the other way round".

DAP and PAS have had a checkered past together. Though they have been the main opposition parties in the country for decades - and have shared electoral pacts - only since March have they formed coalition governments together, in Perak and Selangor.

PKR - its de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim especially - is seen to be keeping the opposition coalition together, despite the differences between DAP and PAS.

PAS were members of BN in the 1970s before an acrimonious fall-out in 1978.

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