

Tuan Guru Nik the right man for PAS members
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The current tiff between PAS' Tuan Guru Nik Abdul Aziz and Abdul Hadi Awang on the issue of forming a unity government in the country is only a storm in the tea cup. Both are aware that PAS has made a huge impact on the Malaysian political scenario since the last general election.

PAS has, in fact, stayed relevant in the Malaysian political scene since before independence. The present success of PAS can partially be attributed to the support PAS has secured from PKR and DAP supporters. The Pakatan Rakyat (PR) coalition also did help PAS garner more support from many non-Muslims.

PAS political stalwarts should be appreciative that in the many constituencies they won, the non-Muslims played a role in supporting them. This support does not mean that all these people are for PAS, but in some cases it was a protest vote against Barisan Nasional (BN).

Without this support not many of the PAS candidates could have won their seats. Neither could PKR, DAP or BN have won many seats if it was not because of a multi-racial support. This is a Malaysian reality.

Nevertheless, as for PAS, it is now seen as a moderate Islamic party for all Malaysians. PAS has successfully portrayed this image of late. It is a blessing in disguise that PAS is now seen as a modest political party in the eyes of non-Muslims in general.

The negative perception towards Islam has toned down among the non-Muslims, as most PAS leaders have spoken positively about the importance of racial unity in the country. Also, we now can see PAS leaders on the same platform as many other non-Muslim leaders speaking with the same tone – justice for all, irrespective of race.

Credit should be given to Nik Aziz, the spiritual leader of PAS, for his moderate stance. Nik Aziz is a very appealing political figure in the country. Even his nemeses respect him as an insightful political figure. After all, Islam preaches moderation in life and advocates justice for all mankind.

It is this stance that has made PAS a political party to be reckoned with of late. PAS is without doubt getting more support these days.

Most PAS lawmakers are also seen as people with strong principles. There was a time when PAS ruled Kelantan with a razor-thin majority and yet they stood strong without any lawmaker defecting to deprive PAS of ruling the state government. Since the last general election, not a single PAS lawmaker has hopped to another party.

This is great indeed. They have stayed strong with PAS, PKR and DAP. This has won them a lot of admiration from the electorate who voted them in.

Just like Barisan Nasional, Pakatan Rakyat has brought in people of all races to stand on their platform – though some having different approaches to their political agenda. This, in a way, augurs well for Malaysian politics. We could also now see a moderate DAP and people of all races mingling and hugging each other at functions jointly held by PAS and DAP.

These scenes were at one time only seen in Barisan Nasional held functions. It is a sign that we are moving towards a two-party system that will benefit the people more. This is what Malaysians should cherish. Both Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat should prevail in Malaysian politics in the name of democracy.

For without a responsible opposition in Parliament or in the state legislative assemblies, it will not bode well for the country. Check and balance should prevail in a democracy.

PAS is an entity by itself. It is an alternative platform for the Malay majority in the country. The party, despite its Islamic brand, works with PKR and DAP on a common premise – seeking justice as a common stand.

As long as this common premise of PR's aspiration, the coalition will survive. But if personal interests overshadow the need to work on this common premise of seeking justice for all Malaysians, the coalition will collapse.

PAS aspirants should not be misguided by the thought of seeking power too soon. A few states are now headed by PAS chief ministers. It should strengthen its existing position, stick to moderation and make administering justice to all mankind as their spine of success and hence towards being accepted by all Malaysians.

The best option for PAS now is none other than to cooperate with PKR and DAP to strengthen PR, which is seen as an alternative to the incumbent Barisan Nasional at the national level. A viable opposition is always crucial in a parliamentary democracy.

For PAS to pull out from this coalition for some vested political interests will guarantee their immediate unpopularity of the party. PAS should be aware of this.

In other words, Nik Aziz is right when he always advises his party members to stay as PAS and work towards making PAS a workable party for all Malaysians. PAS should not compromise on matters so close to their heart – Islam as a way of life to bring prosperity to the nation.

The reality is that Malaysia is a multi-racial country and Barisan Nasional has managed to lead the country based on this formula - realising that all Malaysians have a place in this land of opportunity.

It's a matter of principle that one has to adhere to in politics, said Nik Aziz when chiding Hadi on matters relating to forming a unity government.