

PAS calls in malcontents to end open spat
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By Melissa Chi

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 26 — The top PAS leadership will meet Datuk Dr Hasan Ali, Nasharudin Mat Isa and Selangor PAS information chief Shaari Sungip “soon” to resolve public disagreements over party policies that can undermine its chances in the general elections, officials say.

Both Hasan and former PAS deputy president Nasharudin have disagreed with the party over its political direction, while Shaari is in hot water for saying Hasan could be dropped as a candidate for the next general elections.

“Once this is over, the public will be back with us,” secretary-general Datuk Mustafa Ali told The Malaysian Insider last night.

The normally united PAS has seen a war of words breaking out in both the mainstream and online media over its policies on a welfare state or an Islamic state.

The disgruntled few have accused the party leadership of pandering to Pakatan Rakyat (PR) at the expense of its aim to set up an Islamic state or have unity talks with Umno. Umno has pursued such talks since Election 2008 but has been rebuffed by the Islamist party.

Mustafa told The Malaysian Insider that he will stop the public row with Hasan, after the Selangor state executive councillor’s apology on Saturday.

He added that the infighting played out in public will not diminish the support from the party’s supporters.

Party vice president Datuk Mahfuz Omar refused to comment on the issue but said the party leaders are seeking an explanation from Hasan regarding various controversial statements to the press.

Salahuddin Ayub, another vice-president, said the party leaders had accepted Hasan’s apology on Saturday.

“I hope that all this problem will be settled in the near future and I hope it will close rank among us and I think can solve the problems,” he said.

He also added that Hasan should have come to party meetings before going to the press.

“Party leaders already understood our dos and don’ts in our party and I think Hasan Ali should as well.

“He was a vice president and now for a time being as a central committee member. He is also ... still a Selangor state executive councillor,” he said, adding that Hasan “still plays a very important role in our party”.

Mahfuz said the leadership will ask for an explanation from Hasan, not just about welfare state issue but also others he has brought up in the media recently.

Hasan apologised on Saturday for claiming the welfare state championed by PAS deviated from the party's Islamic agenda.

"I admit some of what I said went too far. I hereby withdraw my comments about the welfare state.

"I apologise to the leadership and party members for going too far," the PAS central committee member told reporters at his residence here.

The Selangor state executive councillor also said he was willing to meet the party leadership anytime to explain his comments carried by Umno-linked newspapers.

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