

As GE13 looms, Hadi says PAS ready to replace Umno
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 2 – PAS is set to replace Umno as the main party for Malay Muslims, Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang said at a giant rally in Alor Setar to galvanise its rank-and-file ahead of national polls that must be called by next March.

The PAS president (gambar) added that the “Negara Berkebijakan (Benevolent State)” model he mooted at its annual general meeting last year was gaining support among the minority races and non-Muslims, which was worrying political foes in Umno and the Barisan Nasional (BN) federal coalition.

“The ‘Negara Berkebijakan’ that PAS wishes to build has worried Umno and BN because for the past 54 year they have been discriminatory not just towards other races but among Malays and Bumiputeras,” he said at the Islamist party’s assembly that kicked off yesterday, believed to be the last before the 13th general elections are called.

“The ‘Negara Berkebijakan’ model is based on the Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah and I am confident it will dispense justice to all regardless of race or religion,” he added.

The BN’s mandate expires next March but PAS believes it poses a strong challenge to political foe Umno even as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak seeks to claw back its two-thirds control of Parliament lost in Election 2008.

Hadi stressed that there was no dispute on developing the “Negara Berkebijakan” concept with the party’s fight for Islam as contained in the PAS constitution.

Previously, past leaders including former Selangor PAS commissioner Datuk Hasan Ali had accused its top ranks of abandoning the party’s goal of forming an Islamic state in order to gain the favour of non-Muslims and its secular and more liberal partners in the Pakatan Rakyat (PR), DAP and PKR.

But Hadi repeated that the “Negara Berkebijakan” concept meant a government that administered fairly in all aspects, including the rule of law, the judiciary, politics, economics and society.

The Marang MP said PAS wanted to hold talks on a large scale with any non-governmental organisation (NGO) to explain this concept following a dialogue with Muslim groups last week.

He said the talks were open to all groups, not to debate Islam but to find a common ground based on the Quran and hadith.

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