

Ikatan dismisses third force claims, won't contest in GE
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By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, June 7 — Newly-formed Parti Ikatan Bangsa Malaysia (Ikatan) said today it will not contest in the next general election, saying it was “too soon” for such a move.

The party also said it had no intention to become a “third force” in Malaysian politics, saying its goals were more “issue-based”.

“It is too soon for us to be taking part in elections, we are here for the long haul.

“We are not here as a third force, we are issue-based. Seems to be more in common with Pakatan Rakyat (PR) with regards to issue for free and fair elections,” Ikatan protem president Tan Sri Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said at Ikatan’s official launch here.

But he also said Ikatan hopes to be “big in the shortest possible time” and that its leaders will aim to contest in the 14th general election.

“Come the 14th GE, we hope to be the biggest party in Malaysia.

“Although there are a lot of multiracial parties, our emphasis is Bangsa Malaysia,” he added, saying Ikatan was confident of registering 500,000 to a million members within a year.

The former Umno minister spent a good part of his speech extolling PAS’s virtues, saying the Islamist party’s struggles were similar to that of Umno’s during the time of the late Tunku Abdul Rahman.

When asked why he did not join PAS, Abdul Kadir said: “I can join PAS, but my friends (here) cannot.

“If we join other parties we will just be normal members... (But) if more people have positions, the better then they can get their own people working on the ground.”

Ikatan sent an official application letter to the Registrar of Societies (RoS) on June 5.

Abdul Kadir’s new party could very well bolster opposition towards BN in the next general election as the former Umno man has been openly critical of his one-time party, even accusing Umno of vote-buying.

He claimed back in January that Umno handed out cash in previous election campaigns in attempts to buy votes, a tactic known as “bomb”, and that he had himself seen how cash handouts ranging from RM200 to RM1,000 were used in BN’s campaigns to gain voter support.

The former tourism minister has previously said he has not ruled out joining PR and has been spotted attending and giving speeches at opposition rallies.

He also took part in the April 28 Bersih rally in the capital city alongside PR leaders such as the DAP’s Lim Kit Siang and PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang.

Abdul Kadir quit Umno early this year to focus on carrying the “original fight” of the party’s founding fathers for equality and democracy through Angkatan Amanah Rakyat (Amanah).

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