

In Pasir Mas, Nik Aziz's son faces trial by Perkasa fire
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 24 — PAS's Nik Abduh Nik Abdul Aziz is putting his fledgling political career on the line to take on Perkasa president Ibrahim Ali in the latter's home ground come Election 2013.

Victory for Nik Abduh, the son of PAS spiritual advisor Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, may cement his ascendance in the party, said The Straits Times today.

But defeat — now more likely after Barisan Nasional failed to field a contestant in the federal seat — would prove a major blow for the nascent political life of the 43-year-old.

What had been expected to be a three-way also involving BN's Che Johan Che Pa turned into the current straight fight between Ibrahim and Nik Abduh after the BN man inexplicably failed to submit his nomination.

Some see the omission as a deft move by BN to indirectly boost Ibrahim's chances, after failing to extend to him a party ticket as exhorted by Perkasa patron and former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"Mr Ibrahim stands a better chance in a straight fight as the Malay votes will not be split," said Associate Professor Shamsul Adabi Mamat of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia told the Singapore newspaper.

Already facing an uphill battle, Nik Abduh may now face an even tougher fight after BN also said it was open to Ibrahim riding on its coattails in Kelantan.

"It is up to him if he wants to hitch a ride. Pandai-pandai dia la," Kelantan BN secretary Datuk Md Alwi Che Ahmad told The Malaysian Insider in a telephone interview.

Despite the daunting task, Nik Abduh is keen not to depend on the popularity of his iconic father.

"I want the people of Kelantan to accept me as a PAS fighter and not the son of Tok Guru," he was quoted as saying in the report.

Dr Mahathir's close affiliation with the firebrand Malay leader Ibrahim has oftentimes earned Umno criticism for its alleged link to Perkasa, which is known for its hardline Muslim stance.

It has often been said that Perkasa's controversial existence and declaration as BN's staunch supporters was to help Umno keep its support of Muslim hardliners, many among whom have grown critical of the new leadership's more liberal stance.

Once an Umno deputy minister, Ibrahim won Pasir Mas in Election 2008 on a PAS ticket but later quit the Islamist party and declared himself a "BN-friendly" Independent.

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