

**In Selangor impasse, is PAS spoiling to be kicked out of Pakatan?
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BY THE MALAYSIAN INSIDER**

Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang needs a big favour from PKR and DAP. One last favour.

He needs their leaders to conclude that they have reached a point of no return with him and his hardliners and cut all remaining ties with PAS.

In short, the PAS president needs his one-time political allies to kick the Islamist party out of Pakatan Rakyat (PR).

Why? Hadi knows that PAS rank and file want the party to remain in PR and he could suffer a backlash in the party elections next year if it came across that he pulled PAS out of the pact.

So Hadi needs his partners to be the bad guys and pull the plug on his party's participation the country's most successful alternative to the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition.

This appears to be his strategy, given his behaviour and uncompromising stance in separate meetings with DAP and PKR leaders this week.

Instead of coming to the table with the aim of solving the impasse of the removal of Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim as the Selangor menteri besar, the PAS president has been antagonistic, belligerent and completely out of touch with his party's real strength on the ground.

Sources told The Malaysian Insider that during the meetings, he was unwilling to yield on hudud, telling his allies that despite objections from within DAP and PKR,

PAS will march on and push for the Islamic criminal code to be implemented in multiracial Malaysia.

PAS also could not accept a woman as a menteri besar, a position that will surely sully PR's efforts to paint itself as a progressive political force and reach out to female voters, an increasingly powerful voting bloc.

Also evident from the meetings was Hadi's belief that he should be playing a far more prominent role in the coalition than Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and that the voice of PAS should carry more weight than PKR and DAP.

His antagonistic stance surprised DAP and PKR leaders. They knew the meetings would not be a walk in the park but they were unprepared for aggressive words and unfriendly body language.

It almost seemed as if Hadi had forgotten that his party had shared the trenches with DAP and PKR in two wars – GE12 and GE13 – and had won significant battles along the way.

Also, for someone whose party under-delivered in GE13, whose refusal to change the menteri besar in Kedah caused the fall of the state to BN and who needed a chunk of non-Malay votes to win a chunk of parliamentary seats in the peninsula and state seats in Selangor, he was cocky and dismissive of the importance of PR to PAS.

Hadi's demeanour led some at the meetings to conclude that he was trying to provoke DAP and PKR into a sharp reaction, perhaps even cutting ties with PAS.

So far, PKR and DAP leaders have not lashed out, waiting instead to see the outcome of the PAS central working committee meeting this Sunday where the Hadi camp is expected to come up against the professionals and moderates over the Selangor crisis.

The smart money suggests that Hadi and ulama may walk out of the meeting

bruised but still as victors. If that happens, the PKR-DAP-PAS alliance will be as good as dead. Because quite clearly, there are fundamental differences between PKR-DAP on one side and PAS on the other and these differences are too deep and important to be ignored.

Chief among them is Hadi's insistence on pushing through the hudud agenda and PAS's refusal to accept gender equality.

A similar thing happened to the earlier pact called Barisan Alternatif (BA), which unwound in 2001 on differences between PAS and DAP. But this time, it is happening to a more successful coalition.

Today's weekly Selangor executive council meeting will see how far PAS will go to either save PR or drive it to the same rubbish heap of history that BA had ended up in. – August 13, 2014.

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