

## **New political party by PasMa bad for Malay unity, says former PAS deputy president**

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**By Mohd Farhan Darwis**

The transformation of pro-Pakatan Rakyat group, PasMa into a new political party will only disrupt the unity and understanding among the Malays and Muslims, said former PAS deputy president Nasharuddin Mat Isa.

He said the idea of the new political entity to rival Islamist party, PAS could also bring a negative impact to the country.

"I have been working so long on a political understanding between PAS and Umno as a top choice for the Malays and Muslims in the country. So, with the entrance of a new party, it will affect this understanding, it may not be good for the future," he said. During his tenure as the deputy president, Nasharuddin was one of PAS' leading proponents on entering talks with political rival Umno.

However, Nasharuddin believed PasMa can never challenge PAS in the Pakatan Rakyat coalition, despite the discord between the party and DAP.

"Malaysia is a democratic country. Anyone can form a party. Ultimately, the people will decide," he said, when met by reporters at a function in Bandar Bukit Mahkota, Bangi today.

Compared to PasMa, he said PAS has a track record of ruling state governments.

"PAS' success in governing the states is evident. A new party is not going to give a big impact.

Asked if he has been offered to join the soon-to-be set up outfit, Nasharuddin replied in the negative, saying that he preferred to focus on his community-related activities instead.

"I'm more interested in my work right now, serving the community. I also have a bigger canvas to work with and a lot of things to contribute," he said, referring to the Nassar Foundation, a non-government organisation he has led since leaving PAS leadership and Parliament in 2013.

"Whatever I can do to help PAS, I will do, but not the top jobs. I can still contribute even as an ordinary member," he added.

On the results of the recently-concluded party polls, which saw the pro-ulama faction sweeping the party's top leadership, Nasharuddin said it was a positive development for the party.

"All this will be new to the party president, to have loyal members and supporters who will ensure he can move forward," he said.

With that, Nasharuddin said now is the time to strengthen the relationship amongst the Malay and Muslim community.

"PAS and Umno need to sit down," Nasharuddin said.

"With Ramadan coming, I hope the leadership will be able to look for ways that can bring benefit to the people," he added.

He said with continuous criticism from DAP, PAS leadership should also consider re-examining their relationship with the party.

"I spoke about the relationship between PAS and DAP four years ago. Now, it is clear how the DAP keeps on attacking the party and president. They are not only anti-PAS, they are anti-Islam," he added.

PasMa president Datuk Phahrolrazi Zawawi yesterday said it was clear that PAS did not want to reconcile with DAP and felt that a new coalition needs to be formed based on a stronger agreement.

Cooperation within PR effectively ended after PAS moved a motion without debate at its congress to cut ties with DAP. The motion was a tit-for-tat for DAP's decision to cut ties with PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang over his unilateral approach and failure to abide by common consensus in Pakatan.

PasMa was set up less than a year ago as an NGO for those in PAS who want continued political cooperation under PR. – June 14, 2015.

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