

Pasma spurns stand-alone PAS at general election
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Group gives full backing to Pakatan Harapan and one-to-one contest against Barisan Nasional.

KEPALA BATAS: The Pasma group of mainly PAS supporters has spurned the Islamist party and announced full support for Pakatan Harapan candidates at the next general election.

Pasma president Phahrolrazi Mohd Zawawi said the group would not back any opposition party that stood on its own, and instead supported the campaign to have only two-cornered contests against the Barisan Nasional.

PAS has threatened to field candidates on its own, raising the possibility of opposition votes being split, while Pakatan politicians have said that the best prospects for opposition success lay in straight fights against the Barisan.

Phahrolrazi, speaking to reporters after the group's convention here, said Pasma was a Pakatan Harapan supporter and that its members were free to support any of the three parties in the coalition.

Phahrolrazi, who is also Pengkalan Kundor assemblyman, said Pasma would not support a solitary opposition party like PAS.

"Feud is not the issue here. We just will not support any solitary opposition party because we stick to the system of two-cornered fight," he said.

He said Pasma was ready to support any policies and efforts by Pakatan Harapan in the states especially in Penang.

Phahrolrazi also urged Pakatan leaders in the Selangor government to take the same stand as Penang and establish a Pakatan Harapan coalition to administer the state government.

This would exclude PAS, which had an acrimonious breakdown of relationship with the DAP earlier this year, causing the latter to declare an end to the Pakatan Rakyat coalition of PKR, DAP and PAS, and forming a new coalition, Pakatan Harapan, with PKR and the breakaway Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah).

Pakatan Rakyat coalition state governments were formed in Penang and Selangor after the 2008 and 2013 general elections but after the breakup of the coalition, the DAP removed all PAS members from its administration of the Penang state government and declared a Pakatan Harapan administration.

However, Amanah does not have a seat in the state assembly and the sole PAS assemblyman has given his support to the state government and remains head of a state religious body.

In Selangor, menteri besar, Azmin Ali, who is PKR deputy president, has maintained the former coalition of Pakatan Rakyat politicians in his administration, with PKR, DAP and PAS members in his executive council. He has so far not heeded calls to include Amanah members and remove PAS.

– BERNAMA

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