

**Hadi: Let others bicker, PAS maintains stand on PM candidate**  
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**The PAS president says he was asked about the opposition's candidate for prime minister by the US ambassador in 2013.**

PETALING JAYA: While Pakatan Harapan component parties bicker over their choice for prime minister in the event of a victory in the 14th general election (GE14), PAS has remained steadfast in its principled stand on the matter, its president Abdul Hadi Awang said today.

He said the party's main criterion is that the prime minister must be a person who accepts Islam.

"PAS will not be influenced by any political culture other than Islam," he said in a statement.

"We are obliged to accept anyone who accepts Islam even though he is not from PAS," he said, citing the assertion made by the late Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, who was the party's spiritual leader from 1991 to 2015.

Hadi said the issue of who would be prime minister was raised by then US ambassador (Paul W Jones) during a meeting also attended by other embassy officials prior to the last general election in 2013.

"He asked me: 'Who will be PAS' candidate for prime minister of Malaysia if you win the general election?'

"I spontaneously replied: 'Who is the candidate agreed to by the US?' They laughed loudly and then fell silent."

Hadi said many people were asking why PAS has been silent on the matter, especially after the apparent disagreement within PH about who should lead the country.

The speculated list of PH candidates for the post increased after PPBM was accepted into the coalition on March 20.

Prior to that, the original components of the coalition – DAP, PKR and Amanah – did not have any issue on the matter as they all supported PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim to be the prime minister in the event of an opposition victory.

On May 21, DAP and Amanah leaders at the 12th PKR national congress had joined party members in holding up placards that read “Anwar the 7th PM”, while PPM chairman Dr Mahathir Mohamad and president Muhyiddin Yassin refrained from doing so.

The stunt drew criticism from various quarters, including PPBM Youth chief Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman who said the PPBM leaders had been humiliated by the act.

He also said an independent body should be set up to identify the individual who would get most support as the prime ministerial candidate from the people.

On May 24, Invoke Malaysia, a research organisation led by PKR vice-president Rafizi Ramli, produced findings of a survey that showed Anwar as being the most popular choice among voters with 23.5% support, ahead of Mahathir with 16.5% and Muhyiddin with 12.6%.

On June 1, Mahathir said he would not agree to become the next prime minister “for the time being” should Pakatan Harapan win the election, but would consider the move if it was the wish of the public themselves.

However, he said he would not “turn on my friends” in PH, indicating that it would have to be with the agreement of the other components.

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