

PRIME NEWS

Pas split may bring polls, divorces

LOYALTY OATH: It includes marriage as collateral over party membership

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Election Commission chairman **Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof** hopes mass by-elections will not be necessary

HOW closely will Pas parliamentarians and assemblymen abide by the *bai'ah* (oath of allegiance), which can compel them to vacate their constituency seats for leaving the party?

The *bai'ah*, if it is as binding as described by Pas deputy spiritual leader Datuk Ahmad Yakob, could result in mass by-elections, triggered by Pas notables jumping ship

into Gerakan Harapan Baru (GHB).

Contents of the *bai'ah* had never been made public, although a few were leaked following the discord between Pas and GHB.

They include relinquishing elected posts and putting marriage as collateral over party membership. It is not clear how this would affect female elected representatives.

Signatories of the *bai'ah* were also aware that the allowances earned and spent while in office would be considered *haram* should they leave the party for another.

Ahmad had even said the *bai'ah* was done according to Islamic law and such an agreement was recognised by Kelantan syariah chief judge Datuk Daud Mohamad.

Among Pas representatives known to have joined GHB in protest against the recent party polls results were Parit Buntar member of parliament Datuk Mujahid Yusof Rawa; Sepang MP Hanipa Maidin; Shah Alam MP Khalid Samad; Tumpat MP Datuk Kamaruddin Jaafar; Kuala Krai MP Dr Mohd Hatta Ramli; Salor state assemblyman Datuk Husam Musa; Hulu Kelang assemblyman Saari Sungib; and Morib assemblyman Hasnul Baharuddin.

Election Commission (EC) chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof said if the *bai'ah* was adhered to, by-

elections would have to be called if the seats were vacated before May next year — which is within three years after the first sitting of the state assemblies and Dewan Rakyat.

Aziz said such a situation — a host of by-elections due to a violation of *bai'ah* — would be unprecedented.

“The EC is observing the situation closely. If they really adhere to the *bai'ah* and vacate their seats before May 2016, the EC will have no choice but to hold the by-elections as the Federal Constitution dictates that when there is any casual vacancy, a by-election has to be called.

“As far as I can recall, this particular situation in relation to *bai'ah* is unprecedented. I hope it will never take place,” said Aziz to the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

Aziz's worry might stem from the polemics and millions of ringgit to be spent on holding the by-elections, but Universiti Sains Malaysia's Associate Professor Sivamurugan

Pandian offered no words to allay the former's concerns.

Sivamurugan believed Pas would do its best to pressure GHB members to abide by the *bai'ah*, in order to set examples to other party members on the importance of upholding rules and regulations.

“Either that, or members of GHB will have to negotiate with Pas (to hold on to their seats). The pressure is on Pas as well to avoid being selective in reprimanding those who have committed transgressions,” said the political analyst.

Associate Prof Dr Ahmad Tarmizi of Universiti Putra Malaysia, however, opined the *bai'ah* held no water among those who had already made up their minds to leave Pas.

“I do not think that it (by-elections) will happen. If they hold the *bai'ah* strongly, they will not even form a new party. The agreement does not have a strong hold as it is only a political tool.”