

*With the move, Prabowo Subianto gets small boost in bid for country's top job*

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**JAKARTA** – Presidential hopeful Prabowo Subianto has received a small boost in his bid for the country's top job, with his Gerindra party yesterday receiving the backing of Indonesia's oldest Islamic party. But the alliance may not help him much as the United Development Party (PPP) has been plagued by internal conflict and it is likely that disgruntled PPP officials and supporters might back other presidential candidates instead.

PPP won 6.7 per cent of the vote in last Wednesday's parliamentary election, while Gerindra was expected to win 11.8 per cent based on early vote counts. Official results will be announced early next month.

Parties need to win at least 25 per cent of the vote or 20 per cent of seats in the 560-seat Parliament to nominate presidential or vice-presidential candidates.

This means Gerindra would have to get at least another political party on board to qualify for the presidential race. Mr Prabowo, a former general who has struggled to shake off accusations of human rights abuses, is currently running a distant second in opinion polls for the July 9 presidential election behind hugely popular Jakarta Governor Joko Widodo.

Mr Widodo's Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P) emerged the front-runner in the parliamentary election, securing about 19 per cent of the vote, followed by Golkar with about 14 per cent and then Gerindra.

Mr Prabowo said he hopes that a partnership with the PPP will lead more parties to rally behind him.

"It is possible that our coalition will continue to grow," he said at a news conference at the PPP headquarters,

**POSSIBLE THAT COALITION WILL CONTINUE TO GROW, SAYS PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL**

# Former Indon general secures support from oldest Islamic party



the Jakarta Globe reported.

"The PPP sees Mr Prabowo as the right person to lead Indonesia for the better," Mr Suryadharma Ali, PPP chairman and the Religious Affairs Minister in the outgoing government, told reporters.

The announcement of the coalition comes a day after Mr Suryadharma dismissed six party officials, including a deputy, for attempting to oust him.

Deputy chairman Suharso Monoarfa and other officials had asked the party's board to sack Mr Suryadharma over his appearance at a Gerindra rally in Jakarta last month, a move they said has cost the PPP votes in the April 9 legislative election.

**The partnership may not help Mr Prabowo Subianto much as the United Development Party (PPP) has been plagued by internal conflict and it is likely that disgruntled PPP officials and supporters might back other presidential candidates instead.**

PHOTO: REUTERS

But the move backfired and they were sacked by Mr Suryadharma.

"PPP was peaceful, but all of a sudden, there was turmoil. It is my duty as Chairman to restore order (to the PPP)," he reportedly said on Thursday. "If anyone disagrees with the chairman, they can step down."

PPP's win of 6.7 per cent of the vote was marginally higher than the 5.32 per cent it secured in 2009. Some party officials say PPP would have fared better this year if it had allied itself with PDI-P and Mr Widodo.

Given the split in PPP over support for Gerindra and PDI-P, Mr Prabowo may not get all the votes from PPP supporters, said political scientist

Ari Dwipayana from Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta.

The PPP- Gerindra coalition is also likely to end further talk of an alliance among the five Islamic parties, which altogether won a better-than-expected 31 per cent of the vote.

Said analyst Siti Zuhro from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences: "The so-called Islamic party alliance is a strategy to increase the parties' bargaining power as no party has reached the 25 per cent threshold.

"But it is difficult because they don't have a single figure who is strong enough to be nominated (as a presidential candidate)."

So far, only PDI-P is able to nominate presidential or vice-presidential candidates, after it formed an alliance with NasDem, which won 6.9 per cent of the vote.

Golkar had earlier secured the support of Hanura Party, which won 5.4 per cent of the vote. Like Gerindra, Golkar has fallen short of the 25 per cent threshold. Both parties have been wooing other parties in hope of reaching the threshold.

The National Awakening Party (PKB), particularly, has been much sought after as it won 9.2 per cent of the vote, the highest among the Islamic parties.

Mr Dwipayana and Ms Zuhro said that PKB would likely form a coalition with PDI-P and NasDem. If so, the three parties will command an almost 35 per cent of the popular vote.

Pundits argue that Mr Widodo would need 35 to 40 per cent of the vote to better dictate terms in Indonesian politics. He has also warned against an unwieldy coalition of many parties.

## Spike in shops that make false claims to draw customers

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electronics industry interviewed said they do not condone or engage in such "bait-and-switch" sales tactics.

Some cited reasons orders can end up being unfulfilled, but insisted they did not set out to deceive customers.

A product consultant at one electronics store, for instance, said stock kept at the warehouse is delivered to customers on a first-come-first-serve basis, so even if a deposit has been paid, there may be no stock left if the delivery date is a few months later.

He added that the onus is on the salesperson to make this clear to customers before they pay or take the

products to the store for safekeeping, but acknowledged that it depends on individual staff.

Ms Loo Pei Fen, head of marketing at IT retailer Challenger, said: "We do not advertise any heavy price discounts that are gimmicky with long lines of disclaimers or promotion exclusions ... If a particular product is out of stock, customers are always aware of when it will become available (or if it has been discontinued) at the point of transaction."

The director of the store from which Ms Choi had the unpleasant experience told TODAY over the phone that unforeseen circumstances sometimes arise, such as when some sets are found to be faulty and there are no replacement sets because the manufacturer has discontinued that model.

"So we will try to work with the brand and the customers to see how to settle this, such as giving a different model and trying to keep at the same price," he said.



**Electrical and electronics firms interviewed said they do not condone or engage in 'bait-and-switch' sales tactics.**

PHOTO: REUTERS

But for items such as televisions, the price difference between old and new models can be quite big, he noted, adding that their solution is to either offer a very good price for the new model or give a refund.

Ms Choi said she had to fork out the top-up because she had scheduled for cable television and Internet wiring

installation.

"I was assured repeatedly that there was definitely stock left at the warehouse, and they would hold it for me. Even if it was discontinued, the set should still be available or I wouldn't have bought it in the first place," she said. "It's false advertising and very misleading."