

# Cracks in Keadilan ahead of party polls

SUN, 17 OCT 2001

## Developments fuel talk of factions fighting for control

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**PETALING JAYA, Tues:** Trouble is brewing in Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan) as several factions fight for support ahead of party elections next month.

Last month, a "fed-up" youth vice-chief Hamdan Taha resigned, and a few days ago, deputy president Dr Chandra Muzaffar said he will not seek re-election.

These developments have fueled talk that various factions are fighting for control of the party which is only two years old.

Hamdan, who submitted his resignation from several posts (Teluk Intan division head and Perak deputy chairman), said party delegates are divided into factions based on their past Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (Abim), Jemaah Islah

Malaysia (JIM) and former Barisan Nasional.

"For example, Wanita head Fauziah Salleh will see fierce opposition from a JIM candidate. The youth head, Mohd Ezam Mohd Nor, will see strong contest from an Abim candidate," he said.

"The non-governmental organisation (NGO) leaders are trying to take over the positions held by political leaders and this will turn Keadilan into just another NGO."

Hamdan, a former Perak Umno Youth chief, also said many others are fed up and he expects them to resign as well.

Party supreme council member Roslan Kassim admitted that there are factions within the party and they differ on how it should be run.

"Given the different backgrounds, we complement one another. It's just that we are competing to offer better services," he said.

Roslan said the party encourages diverse opinions but "it needs to be nipped in the bud before it becomes destructive".

He said he had not heard anything about more resignations "but if anyone does, one of the reasons may be that he believes he cannot win the election", he said.

Chandra, in announcing his decision last week, said he wants to concentrate on international intellectual organisations, especially in view of the Sept 11 terrorist attacks.

Sources, however, said that Chandra has not been able to agree with some party leaders on the direction of the party.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the recent spate of resignations and problems in Keadilan should allow its members to evaluate and think of the party's true struggle.

Mahathir said Keadilan does not have a meaningful struggle, apart from calling for the release of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from prison.

Asked if Umno will accept former Keadilan members, he said this will have to be looked into.

"They cannot come in and out of the party (Umno) as they wish," he said after launching Permodalan Nasional Bhd's latest unit trust scheme.

Keadilan was formed by former Umno members aligned to Anwar in 1999.

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