

Nalla returns with a bang
Malaysiakini.com
March 23, 2007
Fauwaz Abdul Aziz

After an 18-year hiatus, KS Nallakarupan has returned to politics to deliver 'thunderstorms and earthquakes'.

The former MIC leader, who joined opposition Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) last year, also vowed to bring in Indian members in droves.

Unabashedly, he declared that he brought in 10,000 Indians into the party since his entry six months ago and another 10,000 were eagerly waiting for the green light.

"PKR means Dato Nalla, PKR is Dato Nalla. That is the talk among the Indians," he told malaysiakini during a recent interview.

The businessman is a close confidant of PKR advisor and former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim. The pair had played tennis together during rosier times.

In 1998, Nallakarupan became the first casualty in the struggle between Anwar and his estranged ex-boss, former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Nallakaruppan was charged and jailed for a year for 'illegal possession of bullets with an expired weapons permit'.

Following Anwar's dismissal, Nallakarupan was accused of numerous other misdeeds, including having arranged the former deputy premier's sexual liaisons.

However, this is an episode in his life which Nallakarupan did not wish to recollect.

"The past is past. I don't want to go into that again," he said when quizzed on his experience.

"My suffering in the Sungai Buloh prison and prior detention in (the federal police headquarters in) Bukit Aman are enough for me. I don't want to dwell on that again.

"Don't bring me to that episode in my life. Let me live a new life," added the 60-year-old politician.

He also revealed that he has stopped playing tennis because the sport landed him in a lot of trouble.

"Nobody in the world ever got into political problems by playing tennis, but I did. For health reasons, also, I have decided not to play tennis (anymore)," he said.

Strong support

Returning to his role in PKR, Nallakarupan said he was confident of contributing to the party because there was strong support for him in the Indian community.

He also said that many of them were eager to join the party because they wanted change.

"They keep on coming, there's no end to it. They keep on coming, they keep on calling me. The Indians this time are really going all out. The support for me is very good," he said.

Nallakaruppan, who has received a high number of nominations to contest for vice-presidency in the coming party polls, said the Indian community always sought a leader in PKR and until his arrival, there was no such person.

"Without any position I can bring in people. If I become vice-president, imagine what can happen in the party. There will be thunderstorms and an earthquakes," he stressed.

He was also not perturbed by the reservations and consternation expressed by certain quarters in PKR who feared that Nallakaruppan will inject the 'MIC culture' into the opposition party.

He said PKR Youth vice-chief S Manikavasagam, who was one of those against his entry in the past, was now actively campaigning for his candidacy as vice-president.

As of the day of the interview (March 20), Nallakaruppan said 19 party divisions had nominated him. That puts him by far the most formidable challenger for one of the three vice-president posts in PKR.

He also pointed out that other races in the party also supported him as one of his first nominations came from the Malay-majority division of Sabak Bernam in Selangor.

"They understand. I'm in the party to help PKR and to help my friend Anwar Ibrahim," he said.

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