

New PKR line-up a hit and miss with Indian leaders
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The new line-up of appointed leaders in PKR drew mixed responses from the more notable veteran Indian leaders in the party, with one claiming that it was a step backwards for the community.

rights group on shooting deaths 041210 n surendranDespite the appointment of prominent human rights lawyer N Surendran (right) into the vice-president's post, Padang Serai MP N Gobalakrishnan argued that PKR was still not doing enough for the minority community in the party.

"(The new line-up) was a big let down for Indians in the party. I don't think (PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim) is interested in assisting Indians. I believe that the party is anti-Tamil," he said.

Gobalakrishnan, a popular grassroots leader and a former MIC Youth leader before joining Keadilan back in 1998, went on to question Surendran's credentials.

"Basically 85 to 90 percent of Indians in the country are Tamils. There is a deep Tamil culture that is very deep-rooted in this country. I don't see how Surendran can help in their development," he told Malaysiakini.

NONEGobalakrishnan is the second highest vote-getter among the Indian candidates in the party's vice-presidential race, after Dr Xavier Jayakumar.

Xavier had been appointed to the party's powerful political bureau, along with Subang MP R Sivarasa.

Gobalakrishnan said he had assumed that the party leadership's decision in their appointments would be reflective of the complaints during the recently-concluded party elections.

"I was not happy with the way the party elections was run and there were a lot of hanky panky going on. I thought Anwar would use (the appointments) to correct it," he said.

Taking more potshots at Anwar, he accused the party supremo of failing to walk the talk.

"Anwar has the power but he is not doing more for the development of the Indians. He's just talking politics," said Gobalakrishnan, who appeared disappointed for being overlooked in the vice-president's appointment.

Manikavasagam welcomes Surendran

On the other hand, Kapar MP and former supreme council member S Manikavasagam rubbished the notion that Surendran is not "Indian enough".

NONE"Suren is still Indian what. We need to bring in new faces. And we should give them chance.

"Surendran fights for a lot of Indian issues. He fights for Hindraf, he fights for the demolished temples and the illegal detention cases. And he speaks Tamil," he defended.

Close personal friends with Surendran, Manikavasagam was obviously excited over the former's appointment, but was quick to insist that he did not lobby for the lawyer.

"Suren and I are close friends; he handles all my law cases. But I don't know if the people on the ground will accept him or not. He's young so maybe the party needs young blood," said Manikavasagam, more commonly known as Mike.

He added that while Surendran can count on him for "101 percent" support, he will have to organise a roadshow to "introduce" the relatively political newbie.

But even with Manikavasagam's unsuccessful campaign for vice-presidency in the party polls and not being appointed for any of the leadership positions, he remains upbeat and optimistic.

"Sometimes you get a position, sometimes you don't. It doesn't matter. What is important is the struggle.

"Our Indian support has dropped by about 10 percent since the 2008 general elections. It is our priority to bring back their support and to maintain unity," he said.

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