

Anwar says sorry over defections
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PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim has taken responsibility for a string of high-profile defections which have battered his party's credibility.

"I apologise for my mistakes... It was true that in (the) 2008 (general election), it was really difficult to select candidates and there were many 'dangerous' seats," said Anwar during his winding-up speech at the Pakatan Rakyat convention in Kepala Batas, Penang yesterday.

He was responding to an earlier speech by Karpal Singh who admonished Anwar over the series of high-profile defections from PKR.

Anwar said that he was open to criticism that from now onwards, the party will only field candidates who are not only of calibre, but must be of good character, disciplined and are not greedy for political positions.

"It's also true that this party (PKR) must get rid of those who are not disciplined, and who are greedy and selfish... there must be some (emphasis) on tarbiyah (education and upbringing)".

Since February last year, four MPs and four state assemblypersons from PKR quit the party and declared themselves independent while Kulim Bandar Baru MP Zulkifli Noordin forced the hand of the party to sack him.

The four MPs are Wee Choo Keong (Wangsa Maju) Zahrain Mohd Hashim (Bayan Baru), Tan Tee Beng (Nibong Tebal) and Mohsin Fadzli Samsuri (Bagan Serai) while the four state assemblypersons are Mohd Osman Jailu (Changkat Jering), Jamaluddin Mohd Radzi (Behrang), Tan Wei Shu (Bakar Arang) and Badrul Hisham Abdullah (Port Klang).

Karpal: Zaid 'untrustworthy'

The eight defections and a protracted show of defiance by Zulkifli have dealt a major blow to PKR's credibility.

During his speech, Anwar also accepted Karpal's criticism on accepting former de facto law minister Zaid Ibrahim into the party.

After being welcomed into PKR with much fanfare last year, Zaid went on the warpath against the party leadership during the campaign for the party deputy presidency during the recently concluded internal elections.

Following this, he quit the party in a huff in order to take over Angkatan Kesejahteraan Insan Malaysia (Akim) and renaming it Kesejahteraan Insan Tanah Air (Kita).

Earlier, Karpal (right) had told the 1,800 delegates present that he had advised Anwar to not accept Zaid into PKR's fold but his advice went unheeded.

He said that there was no way that Anwar could deny that he was advised that Zaid was "untrustworthy".

"He may be the main leader of Pakatan, but sometimes, he makes mistakes," said Karpal.

"This celaka (Zaid)... was a misjudgment on Anwar's part... I can say this because I say this from my heart... he (Zaid) can't be trusted based on his looks alone."

Judicial crisis

He reminded the crowd that he had been practising law for about 40 years and considers Zaid, another prominent lawyer, to be the former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad's 'hatchet boy'.

azlanKarpal claims that Zaid had a hand in the sacking of former Lord President Salleh Abbas in 1988, which led to a serious constitutional crisis which was considered the worst black mark in the country's judiciary.

"I know this thing called Zaid... Salleh was a victim... At one point, he (Zaid) had joined the gangsters in Umno in trying to burn down the Bar Council building," said Karpal.

Zaid, however, in March 2008, while he was law minister, had asked Mahathir to apologise for the debacle, which the latter refused, but instead asked the tribunal which called for Salleh's sacking do so.

Turning his attention to Zulkifli, Karpal said that the former was "useless", but was still a glaring example of Anwar's series of misjudgments.

"But he (Anwar) can be forgiven... because at that time, there was a (political) tsunami... there was not enough candidates and many unsafe seats," he said.

He then commended PAS for being a 'disciplined party' as none of its parliamentarians or state assemblypersons had defected to other parties.

"PAS is strong... there were even two defections in DAP but not PAS...," he said jokingly, adding that his two sons - Puchong MP Gobind Singh Deo and Datuk Keramat state assemblyperson Jagdeep Singh Deo - cannot be bought over.