

Anwar not involved with temple 'closure'
Malaysiakini.com
Disember 30, 2010

The ethnic Indian PKR leaders have rallied behind party de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim over allegations of his involvement with the closure of the Sivan temple in Petaling Jaya.

Newly-minted party vice-president N Surendran (centre in pic) said that the decision to close the temple was made by the Petaling Jaya City Council and Anwar had no involvement whatsoever.

"It is ridiculous that a national leader of a party would be involved in a local council decision," said Surendran during a press conference at the party headquarters today.

He added that the accusers, who include former party supreme council member and Padang Serai MP N Gobalakrishnan, were making "malicious" and "ridiculous" accusations.

The Sivan temple situated on top of Bukit Gasing in Petaling Jaya has been the main topic in Gobalakrishnan's recent grouses against the party leadership, even going as far as to saying that Anwar was "anti-Hindu" for allegedly closing the temple.

Temple being renovated, not closed

Former supreme council member S Manikavasagam also rubbished Gobalakrishnan's allegations, adding that he was deeply disappointed with the latter for making unfounded claims.

"If Anwar really did close the Sivan temple down, I'll be the first to make noise. You know me, I'm a noisemaker.

"But the person making these allegations should also know the full story behind the temple," said Manikavasagam, who is also the Kapar MP.

Explaining the situation, Selangor exco in charge of non-Muslim houses of worship Dr Xavier Jayakumar denied that the temple is completely closed off.

"Yes, it is closed to the public only because physical construction work is still going on," said Xavier, who is a former party vice-president.

He explained that renovations on the temple started in 2006, where the temple's board of trustees - which included former MIC president S Samy Vellu's wife, Indrani - had wanted to expand the tiny temple into the largest Sivan temple in the country, that could cater to 100,000 devotees.

Exco involved, not Anwar

A stop-work order was issued in 2007 when it was found that the construction works were causing soil erosion in Bukit Gasing. The order was quickly lifted when the temple remedied the hazards.

Another stop-work order was issued again in December 2008 when the contractors did not meet the local council's safety requirements for slope development.

Since then, the board of trustees had poured RM1.4 million into fortification work of the slope and soil, lifting the stop-work order just a month after it was issued.

"Since then, construction is still going on in the temple. Of course we have to close it to the public and devotees because it is still not safe. But work is still progressing to this date," he said.

"And I want to stress that at no time that Anwar is involved in the decision-making of this temple. The meetings has always been between the temple board of trustees, me and the local council," he said.

Gobalakrishnan had previously zeroed in on Anwar, together with Subang MP and Dr Xavier as being instrumental in "closing" down the temple, before issuing an ultimatum to them to re-open the temple within a week from today.

Suren slams Gobala

With the Indian leaders flexing their muscles amidst Gobalakrishnan's vitriol, one by one, they took potshots at his allegations against the party leadership.

Among others, Surendran (right) shot back at Gobalakrishnan's allegations that he was appointed the party vice-president despite not being a party member and that he was incapable of representing the Indian community due to his lack of fluency in Tamil.

Surendran said that he has been an ordinary member of PKR since 2002.

"In my entire life, I have never seen an issue as empty as what Gobalakrishnan just presented about my membership.

"We are here as leaders of a multiracial party. There are no blocs in PKR. There will always be some who will always rely on their ethnic identities to remain relevant, like Gobalakrishnan.

"I don't want to be judged or do thing just by the colour of my skin, but the content of my character," he said.

Gobalakrishnan has been on the warpath against PKR leaders after Surendran was appointed vice-president.

In a Twitter post today, Anwar said that Gobalakrishnan's recent outburst was a result of his failed lobbying for the position.

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