

Anwar shouldn't debate Najib by proxy, says PKR

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By Terence Netto

PKR vice-president N Surendran is bemused by the flap arising from his party supremo's imputed refusal to debate maverick blogger Raja Petra Kamaruddin (RPK).

"I'm amused as to how the controversy has enabled two escape artists to evade the more pressing compulsions for debate," allowed the busy lawyer-politician in remarks made to Malaysiakini.

"One, of course, is RPK himself: Has there been a more compelling need for the two diametrically opposed parts of him to debate each other, seemingly absurd as that may sound," offered Surendran.

"On the one hand, the public had for years seen the part of him prior to February last year, just before the Sarawak state elections, when he was a significant voice in the medley that was for reform and change in the country," he continued.

"After an astonishing statement he made last February, the man struck an about-face, a turnaround which he has sustained to this day, thus showing a face radically different to the one he held up to Malaysian netizens prior to February 2011," observed Surendran.

Surendran, a likely PKR candidate for the 13th general election, argued that since there has been no distinct change to the political structures of the nation, RPK's volte-face - its mystery, its puzzle - is prime material for a public airing.

"Seriously, a public debate between the two sides of RPK's persona is a way to dispel that mystery, though I'm afraid it would give political ventriloquism a bad name.

"But can that be any worse than what he has given to the crusading reformist spirit on the net with his astonishing somersault of the last year," queried Surendran.

Najib ignores elephant in the room

The PKR veep held that the other escapee from the contretemps over Anwar Ibrahim's imputed refusal to debate RPK was Prime Minister Najib Razak.

"The PM has chosen to ride pillion in this matter by imputing cowardice on Anwar's part but it is he who is ducking out of a debate with Anwar," charged Surendran.

"His remarks to foreign correspondents yesterday had plenty of allusions to the American political scene but he missed the elephant in the room which is the prevalence of public debates between leading contestants," he asserted.

"He wants Anwar to debate his proxy, RPK, which is typical of the rentier culture he represents," quipped Surendran.

