

In jest, Pakatan bids to rope in KL mayor at sendoff
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Pakatan Rakyat MPs jokingly extended outgoing Kuala Lumpur mayor Ahmad Fuad Ismail an offer to join the opposition pact after stepping down from his post.

In a largely cordial, lighthearted meeting at Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) yesterday afternoon, Cheras MP Tan Kok Wai invited Ahmad Fuad to join Pakatan if he was free upon leaving his post, in order to "foster democracy".

The jest was met with laughs from the attendees at the meeting between Ahmad Fuad and Kuala Lumpur MPs, the mayor's last before leaving the position.

Ahmad Fuad related being brought to an Umno event by his father, who was a politician. However, he declined the offer, laughing, "I want to be a normal person."

The meeting was apparently not the first of its kind, with the Pakatan leaders expressing appreciation for the mayor's consistent efforts at meeting KL parliamentarians.

In a touching gesture, Batu MP Tian Chua surprised Ahmad Fuad by revealing that the MPs were planning to treat the outgoing mayor to a "farewell dinner"; this time, the mayor accepted.

The mayor himself acknowledged his apparent coziness with the opposition, as 10 out of 12 Kuala Lumpur parliamentary seats are held by Pakatan.

"There are people who say I am too good with the opposition. But I am not a politician, and until now I have not joined any political parties," he quipped.

He was taking the opportunity to highlight DBKL's achievements throughout his tenure, as well as settle any outstanding concerns of KL parliamentarians before stepping down.

In attendance were Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong), Nurul Izzah (PKR-Lembah Pantai), Fong Kui Lun (DAP-Bukit Bintang), Tan Kok Wai (DAP-Cheras), Lim Lip Eng (DAP-Segambut), Tuan Chua (PKR-Batu) and Wee Choo Keong (Independent-Wangsa Maju).

Random outburst

The meeting's other interesting development occurred when a representative from Bandar Tun Razak stood up and began complaining heatedly about a visit Ahmad Fuad paid to a local organisation, where DBKL had barred them from properly receiving him.

Slamming DBKL for a lack of courtesy and manners, the man then ironically packed up and abruptly stormed out of the room without waiting for a reply.

"You can get out of here if you want," dismissed Ahmad Fuad as the unnamed man walked out.

Aside from the outburst, the rest of the meeting was friendly, with Ahmad Fuad (right)

smilingly touting his achievements in office, such as DBKL's leap in reserves from about RM980 million in 2008 to almost RM3 billion as of last month.

He also handed out booklets of certificates showing off DBKL's various successes, which include ISO certifications, two Malaysian Book of Records achievements and a five-star rating for an assessment of DBKL's online portal.

The representatives then questioned him on local issues ranging from the state of local public parks, illegal structures and the upcoming Pesta Ramadan.

Ahmad Fuad kept his friendly demeanour as he took on the queries one by one, eventually moving on to questions from the media.

After the meeting, he chatted liberally with several of the MPs, even stopping to pose with them for photographers.

Devoid of the usual politicking heard in places such as the state assemblies or Parliament, the opposition MPs were very warm to Ahmad Fuad, agreeing that his successor would "have big shoes to fill".

The outgoing mayor took over from Mohamad Shaid Mohd Taufek on Dec 14, 2008 and will step down on July 16 next week.

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