

PKR incumbent Jason Ong strives to clear his name

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By Susan Loone

As candidates jostle for seats with some fearing they will lose theirs, others are coming out to clear their allegedly tainted names ahead of the fast approaching 13th general election which has been fixed for May 5.

One such hopeful candidate is PKR Kebun Bunga incumbent Jason Ong Khan Lee, who has been accused of alleged forgery and criminal breach of trust (CBT) involving one of his legal cases.

Today, his friends have come out to clear his reputation and support his candidacy, which is believed to be on the chopping block, under PKR as he has yet to be informed whether he is included in the candidates list.

"There was originally a letter from the Advocates and Solicitors Disciplinary Board absolving Ong (right) completely from the two allegations," said well-established lawyer CV Prabakaran in a press conference at Ong's legal office in Solok Jones.

Prabakaran, who has practised law since 1972, was one of the lawyers representing PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim when he was charged with sodomy in 1998.

"All along, Ong has been a victim of serious allegations and I am here to refute them. He has done a good job for his constituency especially in Rifle Range (a notorious slum area in Penang) which has now become a landmark after being given a facelift," added the former Penang Bar Committee chairperson.

Prabakaran produced evidence in the form of a letter from the Advocates and Solicitors Disciplinary Board dated June 15 last year, where director of complaints secretariat Tomis Peter Samat confirmed that there was no forgery and breach of trust on Ong's part.

Legal tussle with former client

This was related to Ong's legal tussle with his former client, Asiabet Sdn Bhd, which produced customised playing cards prior to 2008.

Ong, however, was imposed a RM4,000 fine for being in breach of his professional duty for refusing to release documents requested by his client's new solicitors.

Accompanying Prabakaran were PKR Batu Uban assemblyperson S Raveentharan, Bukit Bendera deputy chief Afnan Idris, Penang Municipal (MPPP) councillor Ng Chek Siang, and lawyers R Dev Chander and Lynette Quah.

Meanwhile, Chander, who is also a PKR member in Batu Uban, warned that Ong is a "victim"

of these allegations.

“He has been cleared by the Bar of CBT and forgery. Anyone repeating these allegations can be misconstrued as being defamatory,” he said.

Ong said he needed to clear his name as these allegations have been flying around since 2008, especially after he won the Kebun Bunga state seat.

“It is time for me to clear my name. I have lodged police reports to prove that my name has been cleared. I want to tell people that I have no baggage, that I am clean and am qualified to stand as a candidate,” he said.

If PKR fields him as a candidate, this would be the third time Ong is contesting, where he contested for the first time in Pulau in 2004 and lost.

However, speculation is rife that Ong will be dropped as a candidate and his seat given to the party’s state election strategist Cheah Kah Peng or the former’s brother in law Felix Ooi, who is also an MPPP councillor.

“Whether I get to be a candidate is besides the point for I leave that to the party leadership. I want to clear my name, as a person and as a lawyer,” he pleaded.

“Let people then be the judge for I believe I have been framed by certain quarters. This is not about my party but about me,” he lamented.