

Don't make it a lose-lose situation, PSM tells Pakatan

MalaysiaKini.com

April 14, 2013

By Nigel Aw

Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) has cautioned Pakatan Rakyat that unilaterally naming its candidates in seats that PSM contested in Selangor at the 2008 elections will lead to a breakdown of negotiations and make three-cornered fights certain.

This comes as Pakatan Rakyat prepares to announce its candidates for Selangor in a high-profile event at Hulu Kelang tonight, featuring opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim and Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim.

"It will be a sad end if it goes that way. I really hope we can resolve it.

"I hope they don't announce anything (on PSM-contested seats) tonight to make things complicated, or it will be a breakdown of negotiations," PSM secretary-general S Arutchelvan (left) said this afternoon.

PSM candidates contested the 12th general election under the PKR banner, but want to use their own logo for May 5. After a 10-year struggle, PSM was finally registered as a political party in July 2008.

PKR has demanded that PSM contest under its banner again, on the grounds that the socialist party's clenched fist logo is not well known and may confuse voters.

If it does not, PKR will field its own candidates in the seats PSM intends to contest, leading to three-cornered fights.

'Last-ditch effort'

Malaysiakini understands that a last-minute attempt to solve the deadlock was made at a high-powered meeting yesterday between between PKR's Anwar Ibrahim, Tian Chua and Dr Xavier Jeyakumar, and PSM's Nasir Hashim (left), Dr Jeyakumar Devaraj and Arutchelvan.

A source told Malaysiakini that leaders from both sides left the hour-long meeting looking grim.

"There was no progress, everything is back to status quo (with three-cornered fights), said the source.

When contacted, Arutchelvan said PSM had offered PKR a compromise where PSM would only use its own logo for its incumbents and use PKR's logo in seats it lost in 2008.

"PSM spent 10 years fighting BN to get the party registered. Our members will not accept if we do not use our own logo at all in any of the seats in this election... preventing us is tantamount to bullying and humiliating us.

"We have already offered to use the PKR logo in some seats and even have offered to join Pakatan. We have gone a step down and we hope Pakatan will give and take," Arutchelvan said.

Following the meeting, PSM is now consulting its members on a compromise situation, while PKR is consulting the Pakatan leadership council, he added.

'PSM has to decide today'

PKR's Xavier when contacted said his party was firm that PSM must use the PKR logo in the coming election.

"We have given our views to PSM and we told them to get back to us by today because we are going to announce our candidates tonight.

"We have yet to receive anything from PSM and if we do not receive a notice by today, we will have to go ahead and name our candidates," Xavier (right) said.

However, Arutchelvan insisted that no deadline was given to PSM.

"That was not what Anwar said. He did tell us to get back to them, but they did not say it has to be today," he said.

Arutchelvan said that PSM was only gunning for the same four seats it contested in the last general election but if three-cornered fights were forced on the party, then the same could take place in other seats where PSM has a presence.

"Even now our members in Cameron Highlands are lobbying us to put our candidate there but we told them 'no', for the goal is to defeat BN.

"But if Pakatan forces three-cornered fights in our seats, then it will make no difference if there are more three-cornered fights elsewhere, including in Cameron Highlands," Arutchelvan said.

'Own logo in Sungai Siput okay'

PSM's Nasir is the incumbent in the Kota Damansara state seat while Arutchelvan, who lost Semenyih in the last general election, is expected to contest there again.

Malaysiakini understands that if PKR announces its own candidates, it will name lawyer Mohd Razlan Jalaluddin for Kota Damansara and bank officer Hamidi A Hassan in Semenyih.

Other than these two Selangor state seats, PSM has an incumbent in the parliamentary seat of Sungai Siput, Perak, under Jeyakumar, who also used the PKR banner in the last general election.

However, it is understood that PKR is agreeable to PSM using its own logo there, albeit with some opposition from the other Pakatan parties.

PSM's fourth seat is in Jelapang, which it contested in a three-cornered fight against DAP and BN in 2008, and lost. Its candidate, M Saraswathy (right) is expected to contest there again.

The incumbent in Jelapang, Hee Yit Foong, defected from DAP to BN and was appointed Perak's deputy house speaker.

PSM is still in talks with DAP to resolve the Jelapang seat.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/226775>