

## **Three Penang BN leaders declare war on coalition**

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**By Susan Loone**

With nominations to be filed on Saturday, Penang BN is apparently in a state of panic over intense factionalism and internal sabotage especially in the Umno and Gerakan camps.

The situation does not bode well for the BN, which hopes to rely on the Malay rural and mixed seats - where candidates from the two parties are to contest - to deliver the votes against Pakatan Rakyat.

Last night, three veteran leaders publicly declared war on the BN after finding out that their names were not on the candidacy list unveiled yesterday.

The trio are Gerakan's Batu Uban coordinator A Mohan and two senior Umno leaders - former Tasek Gelugor MP Shariff Omar (right) and Sungai Dua incumbent Jasmin Mohammed.

Mohan and Shariff have since decided to run as parliamentary candidates in Batu Kawan and Tasek Gelugor respectively, warning of a three-corner fight in each constituency.

Mohan said he also plans to contest a state seat on a Parti Kesejahteraan Insan (Kita) ticket.

Shariff said he would run as a "Pakatan Rakyat-friendly Independent", but would not say which party logo he intends to use.

Both will reveal their decisions on Saturday.

Jasmin (far right in photo), who is Shariff's protege, urged the leaders responsible for putting together the candidacy list to review the matter immediately or face "the people's wrath".

BN state chief Teng Chang Yeow and Penang Umno head Zainal Abidin Osman have been named as those responsible for the "candidacy mess".

They have been accused of "cronyism" by putting up those loyal to them while sidelining others or dismissing the people's choice of candidates.

BN head Najib Abdul Razak was not spared either, with the dissidents questioning his touted slogan of 'People first' and 'Janji ditepati' (Promises fulfilled).

"It seems to be practised backwards as cronies are given first choice while the people's wishes come last," Shariff told a 2,000-strong crowd at a ceramah in Tasek Gelugor last night.

As to Teng's warning that saboteurs will be summarily expelled from their party, Shariff responded fiercely: "Go ahead, do it now. Don't try to threaten us, don't wait until tomorrow, it is not as if I will be hanged to death."

"Do not think these seats are still safe. They are taking a big risk by doing this (by not fielding us)."

The ceramah audience, comprising a large group of Wanita Umno members, gave a resounding 'Yes' to casting their votes for Shariff on May 5.

"Their presence here is clear, so where did the leaders (Penang Umno) get the information from - that we are not winnable candidates?" Shariff posed at a press conference afterwards.

"They did this behind our backs and thought we would not find out, but we have many who are sympathetic to us and who have told us of their plans.

"They tried to control me, they called me even when I was in New York to ask me not to do anything. But it is not about me but the people's decision."

Two of Shariff's loyalists threatened to contest as Independents in Sungai Dua and Telok Ayer Tawar - two seats under Tasik Gelugor - should their preferred candidates failed to be fielded.

### Mohan quits Gerakan

Mohan has terminated 30 years of Gerakan membership, while a group of about 50 supporters held a peaceful rally to appeal his candidacy in front of his service centre in Taman Kasawari, Simpang Ampat last night.

Mohan cut his membership card in front of reporters, while his supporters brought down the party's flags and gave a thumbs down to the BN's symbol, the dacing.

He vowed to close down his Taman Sembilang branch, taking along with him 192 members.

"I was promised the post last month by state BN secretary Omar Fauza. I was told to work harder and I did, day and night," he said.

"My family and I sacrificed for BN but we are not appreciated. Teng did not even say thanks or sorry to me for what has happened."

Mohan said the Gerakan candidate N Gobalakrishnan is an unknown who has never even "threw a stone" in the area.

"Gobalakrishnan was given the seat only last week. Everyone wants to come to Batu Kawan. No one wants to work here, but I did, so why didn't they field me?"

If he contests in the seat, there will be a four-corner fight with Gobalakrishnan, Parti Cinta Malaysia's Huan Cheng Guan and a DAP candidate.

It is learnt that three more hopefuls - Seberang Jaya incumbent Ariff Shah Omar Shah, BN coordinators Ooi Suan Hoe (Machang Bubok) and Jackson Teoh (Ayer Itam ) - may also express dissatisfaction.

Ooi and Teoh have been moved aside to make way for Teng's assistants - Lo Jia Sheng and Tan Lok Seah - in the two seats.

Bayan Baru Umno chief Abdul Rahim Saibu is another leader to watch as he was not fielded in Batu Maung, despite the various welfare programmes he has initiated in the area.

Former assemblyperson Mansor Musa will now contest there against PKR's incumbent Abdul Malik Kassim.

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