

## **Incumbent quits PKR, to run as Independent**

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**By Susan Loone**

As soon as PKR candidates received their letters of appointments from de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim today, at least one incumbent in Penang who was dropped has quit the party and threatened to contest as an Independent candidate.

Machang Bubok incumbent Tan Hock Leong (left) quit all his party posts last night and said he would run as an Independent in the coming general elections.

"I will contest the seat as I would like to sincerely serve the people of Machang Bubok the same way I did for the past five years," Tan said in a press conference at his service centre last night.

"I am disappointed with state PKR chairperson Mansor Othman for not discussing the withdrawal of my candidacy earlier," added the caretaker deputy speaker.

"He had only made a phone call to tell me that I was dropped.

"He just called me and said I was dropped. There was no reason given. Where is the keadilan (justice)?", lamented the first term assemblyperson.

Tan alleged that the PKR leadership practised cronyism as a candidate from Selangor - Lee Khai Loon - has been brought in to replace him months before parliament was dissolved on April 3.

Tan, who is PKR's Bukit Mertajam chief, added that the alleged cronyism does not exist only in Penang, but in Perak and Selangor as well.

'People will not merely vote on party'

Lee, the party's national youth information chief, is also Selayang Municipal councillor and a native of Bukit Mertajam parliamentary constituency, which covers the Machang Bubok state seat.

"I heard he is born in Bukit Mertajam, but he had lived in Selangor all this while. What does he know about the people here?" Tan asked.

On his decision to contest under an Independent ticket, Tan said it would be tough to win.

"But I will do it anyway as I believe the rakyat will make the right choice," he said.

He is not entirely convinced that voters would merely choose the party logo without considering the candidates, adding "I am sure people are smarter than that".

Machang Bubok is a mixed seat, and is much sought after as several candidates from different parties may be contesting there.

Other than Lee (right), Gerakan has fielded Tan Lock Seah, while BN Machang Bubok coordinator Ooi Suan Hoe may also quit his party Gerakan to contest there as an Independent.

Meanwhile, as speculated, PKR has dropped two other Penang incumbents - Jason Ong Khan Lee (Kebun Bunga) and S Raveentharan (Batu Uban) - but it is learnt that the duo plans to stay put in the party.

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