

Anwar to quell storm of criticism on Kajang seat

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PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim said he will meet his critics, including lawyer Ambiga Sreenevasan, Pakatan Rakyat partners and possibly Bersih, following his intention to contest for the Kajang state seat.

Anwar acknowledged the concerns are fair and feels he owe them and the people, an explanation.

"They want to hear from me why I decided to contest. I accept the criticism from friends and others who demanded that I explain. Ambiga (left) too, and that's fair.

"I will meet and explain to them, including the people of Kajang," he said in a press conference today at the PKR headquarters in Petaling Jaya.

Last night Ambiga said the PKR owed everyone an explanation following Lee Chin Cheh's abrupt resignation on Monday and Anwar contesting in the vacated seat.

Bersih had also issued a statement condemning PKR's action for betraying the trust of the voters.

Anwar said he accepts the criticism following Lee's departure.

He pointed out this was not the first time something like this had happened, as claimed by Umno and BN.

In the 1990's, two by-elections were held by Umno and BN when then Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Abu Hassan Omar resigned his Parliament seat and contested a state seat to be the Selangor menteri besar.

"I informed PAS and also DAP but due to pressures, I was not able to provide further explanation. I accept the criticism. More clarification will be made soon," he said.

"I take note of the necessity to explain not only to the people in Kajang and Selangor, but also Malaysia."

'Launchpad to Putrajaya'

In the press conference, Anwar was asked whether he was targeting the Selangor MB's post but his mere scripted reply was that Kajang would be the launchpad for Pakatan's move towards Putrajaya.

"Khalid (Ibrahim) has done reasonably well in managing the economic affairs in the state and increase the state reserves. There are however some teething problems...however, overall he has been able to resolve the issues well," he said.

To questions why a younger candidate was not put up, Anwar said this was a party decision.

"I could have contested a state seat in 2008 and also in 2013 if I wanted. This time, pressure and circumstances have forced me to this decision to stand, after much consideration," he said.

Khalid (left), a former Guthrie chief executive officer, is seen as very popular among the Selangor people for his management of state affairs.

On PKR deputy president Azmin Ali saying that Kajang was fortunate to get a world class leader, Anwar said that was his view.

"I would not let it to get into my head. I am from Cherok Tok Kun," he said.

No strings attached

Anwar, PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu and PAS central executive council member Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad also reiterated Pakatan's stance to meet with BN to resolve long-standing racial tensions and economic problems faced by the people.

Anwar said there are no strings attached to the meeting and discussion.

Mat Sabu (left) said that within Pakatan, this was to be taken seriously and was no political gimmick.

"There has been a rise in racial and religious tension. This is serious and should be given serious consideration.

"We know the ordinary citizens feel frightened and what is Penang Umno did in threatening another May 13 is also improper. We are prepared to sit down and find a resolution to the problem," he said.

Dzulefly also pointed out rising inflation which would be at 3.4 percent at the end of the year, could be the highest in South East Asian countries.

He also pointed out that a rise in interest would lead to financial institutions raising their rates and this may lead to more people being declared bankrupt.

Making matters worse, Anwar said the Malaysian ringgit had depreciated against the dollar from RM3.30 to RM3.50 and this points to an economic problem.

“If there are subsidy cuts in the pipeline, they would not help reduce inflation,” he said.

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