

PAS told not to fight PKR choice, for Pakatan sake

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As a last minute attempt to influence PAS' central committee meeting today to discuss the Selangor crisis, PKR Alor Setar parliamentarian Gooi Hsiao Leung said his party has rightly picked its president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as the next Menteri Besar.

Azizah is chosen to replace the embattled Abdul Khalid Ibrahim so that she could carry on the PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim's continuing work to bring about change in the country, Gooi said.

This is a heavy responsibility, he added, which must be jointly shouldered and supported by senior DAP advisor Lim Kit Siang and PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang.

"It is naïve and oversimplistic to accuse PKR of nepotism in nominating Wan Azizah as MB," said Gooi in a statement last night.

"It is also chalk and cheese to compare the case of Wan Azizah to that of PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat's son-in-law, who was sacked from a state-owned firm following allegations of cronyism and nepotism," he added.

Gooi said Wan Azizah has led the party since its inception in 1999 and she is not being nominated for the post of MB for any financial gain.

She is doing it for the party, the rakyat, and continuing the agenda for reform started by Anwar, he added.

"If Sheikh Hasina can be the prime minister of Bangladesh, Megawati Sukarnoputri, president for Indonesia, Corazon Aquino for Philippines or Angela Merkel, chancellor for Germany, why not Wan Azizah for Malaysia?" Gooi asked.

'PAS must respect our chief'

Gooi said Pakatan Rakyat component parties see themselves as equal partners and to work within the coalition's framework, PAS must start by respecting PKR's president and the party's choice to nominate her.

PAS cannot expect to cooperate with PKR if it does not first recognise Wan Azizah as the commander-in-chief of the party, Gooi added.

"It would be an insult to PKR to ask them to nominate someone else beneath the party president as an alternative candidate for the post of MB," Gooi said.

Gooi urged the PAS Central Council to do the right thing “for the sake of the country, and the common goals set out in Pakatan’s manifesto and Buku Jingga to bring about political change in the country”.

“Endorse Wan Azizah as MB, and work with her to continue Anwar’s fight for reform in Malaysia,” he said.

Gooi’s statements comes in the wake of 30 Selangor state assemblypersons from DAP and PKR, including two PAS members, who have publicly declared their backing for Wan Azizah.

The declaration was to show that Khalid had lost the confidence of the majority in the state assembly to carry on as menteri besar.

Khalid, who was sacked from PKR last Saturday, persists in remaining as MB and is awaiting the return of the Selangor ruler on Aug 27 to plan his next move.

PAS, which meets from 10am today, has come under heavy criticism for delaying their decision whether to support Khalid or Wan Azizah as the new MB.

'Anwar still needed'

Gooi said without a doubt, Malaysians today would not have been able to witness great political and social changes unseen in the last 56 years, if not for the Pakatan partnership.

He added that because of Pakatan and the hope it brings to the people, Malaysians would not have witnessed, for the first time in history, BN losing its popular vote in the last general election.

“Let’s face it, the realisation of the Pakatan coalition was a direct of consequence of Anwar’s sacking from Umno and his persecution in 1998,” Gooi said.

“And let’s be honest, it was only because of Anwar’s charisma and stature, he was able to command the respect and cooperation of DAP and PAS to forge an opposition coalition,” he added.

Gooi said some are opposed to the idea of idolising Anwar and that the party must make an effort to “metamorphosise” itself to become above and beyond the man.

While he agreed to this change, Gooi said, “We are not there yet.”

He added that Anwar has achieved the impossible by uniting the opposition parties and bringing unprecedented electoral success in the last general election.

“For this, we must acknowledge and duly recognise Anwar’s unrelenting efforts and

achievements,” he said.

“Anwar has for the last 16 years held the torch for Pakatan and for those in the country who want to see change,” he added.

Unfortunately, Gooi said there is a real likelihood that Anwar will be sent to prison before year-end for his sodomy II charge where he has been sentenced to five years jail, pending the Federal Court decision.

“The question to ask therefore is, faced with the likelihood of Anwar’s imprisonment, who is most qualified to carry his torch?”

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