

It was Amanah, DAP who suggested me, says Shafie on PM candidate issue

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Sabah Chief Minister Shafie Apdal became the talk of the town last month when his name was mooted as a potential prime minister candidate for Pakatan Harapan Plus.

However, despite having allegedly agreed to this idea, Harapan components DAP and Amanah later came up with a joint statement that they would leave the matter to be decided at the coalition level.

Following a Harapan presidential council meeting on July 5, the coalition said it was sticking to its earlier decision to have Anwar as the prime ministerial candidate.

Speaking about this during an interview today, Shafie (above) revealed that it was DAP and Amanah who had mooted his name.

"It was suggested by DAP and Amanah. It was not Dr Mahathir Mohamad's suggestion. They posed that kind of idea to provide a solution as neither Mahathir nor Anwar Ibrahim can work together," he said in Kuala Lumpur today.

According to the Warisan president, the two components of Harapan came up with that suggestion as a third option to overcome an impasse after PKR-led Anwar rejected having Mahathir as their PM candidate again.

Shafie said the U-turn made by Amanah and DAP shows how indecisive Harapan is.

The Semporna MP said he had never demanded to be named as PM candidate, but it was mooted after Harapan came into a deadlock even after having meetings after meetings to sort out the Anwar-Mahathir issue.

For the record, Harapan Plus, which is a loose pact of Harapan components and their allies in the opposition, namely Warisan and the Mahathir-led Bersatu faction, had previously discussed having Anwar as PM candidate and Mahathir's son Mukhriz Mahathir (below) as deputy prime minister.

This option was however rejected by Warisan, as Shafie said he would only support Mahathir to become PM candidate, albeit only for six months before

handing over to Anwar.

This was the second option discussed by the parties, which also include Anwar being the candidate to become Mahathir's deputy.

Shafie said Mahathir, who had since withdrawn himself from running for candidacy, did not take long to agree to the suggestion.

"Tun (Mahathir) responded to that suggestion by Lim Guan Eng, (he gave it a) thought for about two minutes, and he said 'why not? It's a good idea'," Shafie said.

Need to sort out with DAP, Amanah

Asked on whether the option is still on the table for the opposition, given that Harapan has decided to name Anwar, Shafie told reporters that he would need to sort out the matter with DAP and Amanah first.

He said that Anwar had met him in Parliament yesterday and asked to meet for a discussion.

However, Shafie stressed, he would not be able to indicate to Anwar about the idea since the two parties that came with the suggestions had said otherwise.

"Well, I believe I will talk with some of my colleagues who suggested my name first. Because I have to make sure and clear it up first.

"Because I can't indicate to Anwar. I'm not up for it anyway, (I'm doing it) because I'm just a solution to the problem.

"Let me sort out what happened with Amanah and DAP. They have suggested my name, and all of a sudden it's otherwise. So I think I have to sort out with them first."

Shafie said they would try to also get PKR on board with the plan.

He claimed that besides Mahathir and MPs loyal to the former prime minister, several from Anwar's camp have also conveyed their support to him.

"If we can get together to vote in Parliament for certain common interests, then why not? I mean, say that that is the solution.

"Mahathir's camp is supporting me and some from Anwar's camp are supporting

me and they have conveyed the message.

"But of course it will take time, but time is not with us."

Need to get past the impasse

Shafie said he believed that having a prime minister from Borneo would be the dream of Malaysia's forefathers, who wanted to see Sabah and Sarawak as equal partners in the formation of Malaysia.

The country, he added, has had seven prime ministers from peninsular states of Johor, Pahang, Penang and Kedah, and none from Sabah or Sarawak.

However, having said this, he stressed that what matters more was for Harapan to overcome the impasse and work towards bringing the country forward.

"The people in this country are crying for our help. Where are we going? We have no jobs, no income. Children need to survive.

"People's lives and demands are more important than about who will become the PM candidate."

On the same issue, Shafie was asked whether it was possible to see Warisan working together with Sarawak ruling party GPS.

On this, he said it was something that they have done since during the time Harapan was the federal government.

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