

Ezam: Interference 'very unbecoming'
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Beh Lih Yi

Ex-Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) Youth chief Ezam Mohd Nor has lambasted the interference of top leaders in the upcoming party polls, which he described as "very unbecoming".

Ezam, who quit all party posts in February, revealed he had advised Youth wing secretary SD Johari Yassin to pull out from the party polls when the latter met him to seek advice.

"The leadership has been prejudiced against him which is very unbecoming. I advised Johari to pull out and concentrate on helping me in (corruption watchdog) Gerak," Ezam said when contacted today.

"It will be very difficult for him to be in the Youth wing with such prejudice. That's my personal advice to a friend," he said.

The duo are known to have close ties - a ground cited by Johari to back his claim that the top leadership is frustrating his plan to contest the No 2 post in the wing.

Johari (photo), who received the highest number of nominations for the post, withdrew from the contest in protest, also accusing PKR advisor Anwar Ibrahim of meddling in the elections.

He also claimed Anwar has ordered the Youth wing's acting chief Shamsul Iskandar Md Akin to find ways to ensure that he would lose. Anwar has since rejected the claim.

No hard evidence

Ezam sounded cautious when asked to comment on Johari's claim.

"I have no hard evidence that Anwar is involved but I know for a fact that there are other party leaders behind this. We should ask them about their motive and reason for doing this," he claimed, but declined to name those concerned.

Asked if he was referring to Azmin Ali (photo), an influential vice-president and Anwar's protege with whom Ezam has previously crossed swords, he replied: "You can interpret for yourself."

Ezam said he was "upset and disappointed" that his former right-hand man had become the "victim of prejudice" just because there are party leaders who dislike him (Ezam).

"They should not penalise other people in the party (who are closely aligned with me)", he said.

To another question, Ezam said his ties with Anwar have not soured as some have speculated.

"I have no problems with him. I went to Ijok to campaign for the party and I still uphold the struggle for reform, (so) there is no issue about me reconciling with Anwar," he pointed out.

'Leave it to wing'

Anwar could not be reached for further comment today but his political aide Sim Tze Tzin said the PKR advisor would like the matter to be sorted out within the Youth wing.

"He has commented on the matter yesterday. He would like to concentrate on the preparations for the congress now," said Sim when contacted.

With Johari's withdrawal, the deputy Youth chief's post will be a straight fight between Fariz Musa and Zamakhsari Ibrahim.

The top Youth post will see a tussle between Shamsul Iskandar and PKR Parit Sulong division chief Hasmi Hashim.

The annual PKR congress will be held from Friday to Sunday at a high school in Seremban.

It will kick off with the annual meet of the Youth and Women wings simultaneously on Friday, followed by the main body on Saturday and Sunday.

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