



**Do-or-die battle in Pasir Salak and Gopeng
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Perak PKR may see two of the party's 'hot' division seats of Pasir Salak and Gopeng being fought over in a do-or-die battle for political survival by the four candidates in today's keenly contested race.

Party sources have classified the Pasir Salak division contest between its incumbent acting division chief Mustaffa Kamil Ayub and the former head Osman Abdul Rahman under the 'critical' category.

While the cliff hanger seat of Gopeng involves incumbent division chief Dr Lee Boon Chye (*left*) fending off the challenge from party state secretary Anwar Zakaria with a 50-50 chance of the result going either way.

Mustaffa, who is also party state chief and party national vice-president, has to wrest this divisional seat from Lee to add muscle his chances of winning in the race for the party's deputy president post later this year.

Likewise, Lee who is also Gopeng MP and party national vice-president, has to hang on to his seat of six years, to ensure enough political deposit to hold down his vice-president's post again at the national level.

Facing many allegations

The state PKR party seems to be solidly backing Mustaffa, the blue-eyed boy of party *de facto* leader Anwar Ibrahim, to maintain his division seat as his opponent Osman had been hit by various allegations at yesterday's state party media conference.

Osman has been accused by party members of being backed by Behrang assemblyperson Jamaluddin Mohd Radzi, who has abandoned, the party, to ensure a Mustaffa loss.

Party leaders had also claimed that the proposer and seconder of Osman's nomination to vie for the seat had not paid up their membership fees, thus disqualifying him as a candidate.

When contacted, Osman denied Jamaluddin was lending him support, and claimed that he has copies of the payment receipts for his two supporters to prove that they are still PKR members.

"They are talking uncalled for nonsense. If one is oppressed, than all sorts of allegations will crop up," he said the party veteran, previously Pasir Salak division chief for eight years.

As to allegations of money politics, Osman said in rebuttal: "Ask them to prove it! It is easy to make such accusations to discredit me in the eyes of party members."

'Unhappy with Mustaffa leadership'

He told *Malaysiakini* that he returned to active politics persuaded by many party members, apparently unhappy with Mustaffa's leadership to the extent that they had sent SMSes,

urging him to take on Mustaffa in today's election to once again head state party.

Meanwhile, Mustaffa said that he is confident of winning the Pasir Salak seat today and also echoed his party leaders' sentiments about Jamaluddin's involvement in the divisional election.

When contacted, Jamaluddin said that he is out of the party now and does not want to get involved in PKR business, saying however that Osman has been his buddy since 1998.

MA Tinagaran, a Mustaffa supporter recently returned as Ipoh Barat division chief, sums up his boss as an active leader who had initiated several radical changes within the party in the eight months since he had taken over the helm, including placing Indian members in key positions to reflect the party's multi-racial composition.

On the Gopeng front, the underdog, Anuar (*right*), said that he is standing against Lee to revitalise the division and strengthen the unity of all party members in the division, which is a Malay-majority area.

While Anuar calculates his chances of victory at 50-50, Lee with his track record, is brimming with confidence of victory yet again.

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