

Zaid backers tell Lee to zip it, warn of 'Azmin cartel'
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After a deluge of criticism for publicly grouching about PKR polls and its party leaders, deputy presidency aspirant Zaid Ibrahim has two voices rising in his support.

The duo are PKR vice-president Jeffrey Kitingan and supreme council member N Gobalakrishnan, who issued separate statements today in Zaid's defence.

Kitingan (*right*) and Gobalakrishnan's point of contention was a front-page report by the *New Straits Times (NST)* prominently highlighting PKR vice president Lee Boon Chye's verbal reprimand of Zaid.

"PKR view with bewilderment Zaid's recent incessant complaints to the press about the party and the ongoing party elections.

"As chief of the Federal Territory and also a member of both the central leadership council and political bureau, Zaid should acknowledge that he is part of the party leadership," said Lee.

Commenting on this, Kitingan said Lee's statement was "unfortunate", especially since it appeared at the eve of the final round of annual general meetings by party divisions.

"I have also read the various interviews which Zaid had given to the media. I find them to contain his aspirations for the party and nothing else.

"He has not been playing victim as suggested by Lee," said Kitingan in a email statement.

He added that his thinking was that all party leaders should welcome any concrete suggestions made by anyone to improve the party and some of Zaid's (*left*) suggestions could help the party achieve its aim for the people.

He said that the party should encourage "reform minded leaders" for the party to move forward.

The 'Azmin cartel' warning

Meanwhile, Gobalakrishnan believes that a powerful group supporting Azmin Ali's deputy presidency bid - which he dubs the "Azmin cartel" - was now in operation.

According to him, the group comprises Lee, outgoing deputy president Syed Husin Ali, vice-president R Sivarasa, Wanita chief Zuraida Kamaruddin, party strategist Tian Chua and PKR communications director Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad.

"Judging by the statements coming out from our very own leaders, including the *de facto* leader (Anwar Ibrahim), who warned of Trojan horses in the party, I can only conclude that these people are all in one group - the group which wants Azmin to defeat Zaid for the deputy's post.

"Am I wrong in making this assumption? Based on what's happening in the party, I don't think so. I am starting to believe the stories about the Azmin cartel now," said

Gobalakrishnan in a statement.

He said that these leaders have publicly spoken out against Zaid and questioned why Lee was now criticising Zaid for speaking to the press.

"It is quite clear that Zaid is being continuously marginalised in the party," he added.

"The various incidents during PKR cabang elections around the country in the past two weeks show that the 'anti-Zaid' sentiment is being put in place by someone high-up in the party."

He warns that it would be a "sad day" for the party should it forget its aims and principles just to ensure Azmin was "given a free ride" for the deputy presidency post.

"I hope not to see that day. Let's allow PKR to remain free and independent," said Gobalakrishnan.

'Put house in order'

In the same vein, supreme council member S Manikavasagam urged Lee to be "neutral" and not attack Zaid.

"Lee must realise that he is also in the contest for a top post and he should not be seen as trying to campaign to win votes by undermining others," said Manikavasagam in a statement.

Commenting on the annual general meetings at the division level, Manikavasagam hoped that the party would overcome problems faced at similar meetings over the past few weekends.

"I feel the party and its office bearers have failed to uphold the fundamental principles of democracy in holding a free and fair election.

"Once again, I hope the party can put its house in order for the coming divisional elections this weekend so that our party does not become the laughing stock in the country," he said.

Manikavasagam hoped that the elections at the division level and nominations for the central leadership will be conducted in a "clean and fair manner".

"We should not be criticising the Elections Commission over the manner it conducts the elections in this country when we ourselves can't do a good job," he said.

PKR direct party election		As of Sept 26
		Nominations
President		
Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail		111
Anwar Ibrahim		13
Zaid Ibrahim		2
Deputy president		
Azmin Ali		90
Zaid Ibrahim		33
Mustaffa Kamil Ayub		16
Khalid Ibrahim		4
Tian Chua		4
Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail		2
Fuziah Salleh		1
Nurul Izzah		1
Vice-president (4 posts)		
Fuziah Salleh		108
Shamsul Iskandar Md Akin		43
Mustaffa Kamil Ayub		31
Lee Boon Chye		30
Mansor Othman		27
Tian Chua		23
R Sivarasa		22
Nurul Izzah Anwar		18
N Gobalakrishnan		15
Khalid Ibrahim		14
Azmin Ali		11
Ansari Abdullah		11
Chua Jui Meng		11
Jeffrey Kitingan		11
Xavier Jayakumar		7
Mohd Noor Manuty		6
Zaid Ibrahim		6
Yahya Shaari		6
S Manikavasagam		5
Abdullah Sani		4
Suresh Kumar		4
Saifuddin Nasution		3
Zamri Yusof		3
Badrul Amin Baharon		2
Yusmadi Yusoff		2
Jimi Donald		2
James Ghani		1
Saiman Marzuki		1
Kamarul Baharin Abbas		1

Source: Unofficial results gathered from party sources
Azlan Zamhari / Malaysiakini