



**Raveentharan crashes out of Bkt Gelugor race**  
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S Raveentharan has crashed out of the fierce battle for the Bukit Gelugor chair, while new chairperson Lim Boo Chang's Team Progressif made a clean sweep of all posts.

The 1,790 PKR members at the party's Bukit Gelugor division polls today saw fierce competition between the two heavyweights, with incumbent and Batu Uban assemblyperson Raveentharan claiming earlier today that a vitriolic smear campaign had been launched against him.

His 'Team Berjiwa Rakyat' faced off against former Dato Keramat assemblyperson Lim Boo Chang (*right*) and his team at the division AGMs this evening.

Held at the Balai Rakyat Taman Tun Sardon from 10am to 4pm, the polls was expected to determine whether the much-criticised 'frog culture' could triumph over the so-called 'reformists' and party 'loyalists'.

Lim's political background – from Gerakan to MCA, and then after March 2008 to PKR – was speculated to be fatal against Raveentharan, whose perceived loyalty and backing from other elected reps was thought to have boosted his chances.

Raveentharan's supporters also said he faced a tough battle as plans to end his political career had been hatched as early as last year.

By then, it was clear to members that the two leaders, both lawyers by profession, could not see eye to eye.

This was evident when division meetings failed to be held due to constant squabbling.

No meetings called

Lim had lamented that Raveentharan (*below*), as division chairperson, had failed to call for a proper meeting ahead of the polls.



He is also said to be closely linked to the new Bayan Baru chairperson and Pantai Jerejak assemblyperson Sim Tze Tsin, and there were fears that the Bukit Gelugor polls would end up marred by irregularities like its sister constituency.

Unfounded rumours making its rounds had also threatened to undermine Raveentharan's chances of seeking another term as candidate in the coming election.

Several accusations had been levelled at Raveentharan – from being a racist ( being pro-Indian), disrespectful to Islam (for not wearing a songkok when visiting a surau), to not capable in performing his duties as state representative.

He was also alleged to have misappropriated division and party funds (some claim RM5,000 was allegedly not banked

into the division's account).

These claims were rubbished by Raveentharan's faction, which claimed to have proof of an attempted coup to oust him.

"This group has only one goal, and that is to rid Batu Uban and PKR Bukit Gelugor of Raveentharan," said Raveentharan's special assistant, Tahir Merican, last night.

'Beyond repair'

To prevent a potential chaotic situation, Tahir, who had just joined PKR before assuming his current duties, called for a truce between the feuding parties.

Discussions between the duo went on amicably at first, during which times Tahir (*right*) thought emerging cracks within the division could be duly mended.

The relationship between the duo, however, soon deteriorated beyond repair.

"(PKR leader) Anwar Ibrahim had to intervene. He called to find out why there were no meetings, and was told by Raveentharan that he was willing to give up the division post for the sake of unity," said Tahir.

"What is the point of clinging on to the division post when we are going to lose Batu Uban due to all our squabbles?" Tahir said Raveentharan had asked.

"But Anwar said 'no' and told Raveentharan to hang on to his post. He then appointed (Batu Maung assemblyperson) Abdul Malik Abul Kassim as coordinator in Bukit Gelugor," he added.



Tahir also alleged that Lim was so determined to get rid of Raveentharan that he supposedly issued a letter to the state leadership calling for a vote of no confidence against the former.

"But we discovered that one of the signatures in the letter was false. The person who supposedly signed it was shocked and submitted an official complaint to us," he added.

"We have lodged complaints to the state leaders but until now, there has been no action, which is why the culprits have become bolder and is now causing further trouble within the division," he lamented.

Leadership dragged feet

It is learnt that state leaders were lethargic in their response to the problem.

Deputy Chief Minister I and state PKR chairperson Mansor Othman is said to prefer listening to to 'Lim's faction' rather than Raveentharan's.

Despite the challenges ahead, Tahir, who was former Umno Bayan Baru branch secretary, pledged his total support for Raveentharan.

He vouched for Raveentharan's character and integrity, saying that he was "multi-racial,

diligent and loyal to the cause of justice and reform”.

He detailed many examples of how Raveentharan had served the people of Batu Uban, regardless of race, religion or social standing as he worked closely with the latter.

“If he were voted in as the division chief of Bukit Gelugor, he would do the same for his members,” said Tahir, after giving a 40-minute talk to about 40 members at the Taman Brown community hall.

“When servicing the people, Raveentharan would never ask from which party the person comes from; he helps all and sundry, willingly and sincerely, so I hope members are aware of his selfless attitude and come out to vote for him today,” he added.

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