

Azmin ditches diplomacy, rips Zaid apart
Malaysiakini.com
November 13, 2010

PKR deputy president candidate Azmin Ali finally let it rip yesterday, after weeks of tiptoeing around allegations made by former contender Zaid Ibrahim, who dropped out of the race this week.

azmin aliAzmin's (left) fiery speech against Zaid in fact suggests that the latter may be at the end of the road in PKR and that his fears of being sacked could well materialise.

"Don't allow a new candidate who joined merely a year ago to try to ruin our struggle of 12 years, asking Anwar Ibrahim to step down. Who are you (to say this)?"

"You have never even gone to a street demonstration, never been arrested, never felt how it is to be poor and have no understanding of what Reformasi means. (Yet you can say) 'Anwar, step back.' This is outrageous," said Azmin.

Speaking to about 60 who attended the Shah Alam PKR division's 'meet the candidates' session, there was no mistake that Azmin's scathing criticism was directed at Zaid even though no names were mentioned.

"A certain someone said he is an advocate of democracy and human rights. In the first week (of central polling) he was quiet because he was leading. Azmin trailing by a few hundred votes... it was no problem. In the third week he crashed. Why was I blamed?"

Azmin, who at around midnight took his turn to speak after about 10 others, also took Zaid to task for disregarding party discipline and criticising the party through the media, in particular those that were regarded "party enemies".

"No system is perfect but you have to make suggestions the right way through the supreme council, not through Utusan and TV3. If leaders have no discipline then how can he discipline his followers?" said Azmin.

The prime candidate for PKR's Nr 2 who is currently in the lead, also took digs at Zaid's apparent penchant to sulk and his inability to work as a team, calling on the members to reject those who think they are "the only (ones who are) clever and eligible".

Zaid a 'parasite'

Also accompanying Azmin were several of supreme council (MPP) candidates who openly displayed their allegiance to Azmin by wearing his button badges on their shirts.

NONEOne MPP candidate from Malacca, Abdul Wahab Ibrahim, even went as far as likening Zaid to a "parasite".

"It's a good thing that he did not win in the Hulu Selangor by-election, because he would have definitely been a frog in Parliament (by quitting the party).

"(He has only) been in the party for eight months and already wants the deputy president post. He is impatient, greedy and reckless - all Umno traits which he is bringing into our party," said Abdul Wahab.

Earlier, Azmin's sole contender Mustaffa Kamil Ayub maintained his vow not to attack his opponents, but stressed that he did not endorse Zaid's call for Anwar and Azmin to step down.

"I had already left when he said that, and has no idea what happened. I swear to God," he said.

He was however adamant in pushing for the central elections committee (CEC) to rectify the systemic flaws in the polls, that he said have resulted in widespread dissatisfaction amongst the grassroots.

"For the sake of party dignity, I will not pull out of the race. Win or lose is not the question, but we want fairness in the process. Charity begins at home, so too does justice," he said.

Youth state chiefs 'like Teletubbies'

Meanwhile, the promise of fireworks between two PKR Youth chief candidates Badrul Hisham Shaharin and incumbent Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin failed to materialise.

Nevertheless, both took their turn to poke holes at the other's campaign.

NONE Badrul (right in photo), who arrived much earlier of the two, started by indirectly criticising Shamsul's present leadership in his passionate account of his plans for the youth wing, and listing out what had gone wrong so far.

He said that the PKR Youth is in the "red zone" because only about 50 of the 163 divisions had managed to send in nominations for polls in the youth wing of their divisions.

Badrul also took a swipe at Shamsul's alleged fondness for changing state youth chiefs without consultation, promising that if he is elected he will let his peers elect the chiefs.

"If I pick the state chiefs they will just follow me like Teletubbies. But if you pick them, they will listen to you," he said.

Shamsul, who was in Azmin's entourage, on the other hand only managed to briefly explain why his team is called Reformasi 3.0 in that it is the third phase after 1998 and 2008, without providing any details as to how his leadership would fulfil his vision of "building connection with youth outside the party (and) defending the tradition of speaking for the rakyat".

NONEThe incumbent nevertheless maintained that Badrul's earlier comment suggesting that he had led the Youth wing into a "red zone" was "slander".

He rebutted that he had managed to grow PKR Youth from about 40 to 165 divisions, of which 110 are active.

Other candidates who spoke at the three-hour event yesterday were MPP hopefuls Negri Sembilan assemblyperson Aminuddin Harun, Selangor deputy speaker Haniza Talha and defending Wanita chief Zuraida Kamaruddin, all of whom used their experience as elected representatives to garner support.

Yesterday's event was one of several 'meet the candidates' sessions held in Selangor ahead

of this weekend's polls, that had hundreds of candidates shuttling between events to meet as many members as they could to gain their votes.

Members were also flooded with pamphlets, name cards and button badges, drumming home the candidate number that they should tick when they go to the polls that will conclude on Nov 21.

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