

PKR-DAP showdown over seat
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By SHAHRUM SAYUTHI AND BEN TAN

TUSSLE: Opposition coalition parties say their candidate would be best suited to win Johor Jaya constituency

A tussle seems to be brewing between Johor DAP and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) on who should contest the Johor Jaya state seat in the next general election.

State PKR chief Datuk Chua Jui Meng said that their candidate was more suitable because the seat was contested by Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM) in the last general election.

"Since PRM had merged into what is now PKR, that seat should be contested by us," said Chua while admitting that the relationship between PKR and DAP "could be much better".

His statement is in contrast with what Johor DAP chairman Dr Boo Cheng Hau said on Monday that they wanted to field more candidates in Johor, including in seats contested by PKR in 2008.

This, Dr Boo, said included the Johor Jaya state seat which was supposedly allocated to PKR.

He had said that Johor DAP would not give way to any other party within the coalition because in 2008, the PRM candidate was beaten with a huge majority of over 10,000 votes.

In 2008, MCA's Tan Cher Puk defeated PRM's Md Nashir Wahab. Chinese voters make up 48 per cent of the voters there, the others being Malays (44 per cent), Indians (7.5 per cent) and others (0.5 per cent).

Meanwhile, on the internal revolt faced by Dr Boo from a segment of DAP members in Johor, Chua said that PKR was concerned about it.

Chua, who is also PKR supreme council member, expressed his hope that Dr Boo would manage to overcome his "difficulties".

"I understand what he is going through but the problem is between Dr Boo and DAP and we (PKR) don't want to add to his burden. "I know he (Dr Boo) is currently under a lot of pressure and I hope he will manage to overcome it," said Chua when met at the Johor Baru Chinese Press Club on Tuesday night.

On Sunday, about 20 members of the Bakri DAP division gathered at the car park of the Wetex shopping mall in Muar to protest against Dr Boo.

They were carrying several banners accusing Dr Boo of being autocratic and wanted state DAP secretary Tan Chen Choon to become the party's candidate for the Bentayan state constituency in the coming general election.

The seat is now held by DAP's Gwee Tiong Hiang but his membership was recently suspended for allegedly misusing party funds to buy a vehicle for his own company.

The members also called on DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng to interfere and take action against Dr Boo.

Chua insisted that he would assist Dr Boo in his time of crisis and that PKR and DAP would always work together.

"Sink or swim, we (PKR and DAP) must be together in the same boat."

Chua said he had requested for all Johor PKR members to refrain from making statements on the current situation faced by Dr Boo and Johor DAP.

He also stressed that all quarters within the loose alliance of DAP, PKR and Pas must abide by the agreement not to issue any statement on distribution of electoral seats for the coming general election.

Meanwhile, DAP deputy election director Anthony Loke said DAP, Pas and PKR had set up a three-member panel to discuss seat allocations for the general election.

The three are Cheras member of parliament, Tan Kok Wai; PKR deputy president Azmin Ali and Pas secretary-general Datuk Mustafa Ali.

"Currently, discussions are ongoing I will not say anything more," said Loke.

However, PKR vice-president Tian Chua said the party had already finalised the seat allocations before November as they had anticipated the 13th general election to be called at the end of this year.

"All I can say is some new faces will be fielded," he said when contacted on Tuesday.

Pas election director Dr Mohd Hatta Ramli said discussions were under way.

"I do not want to reveal whatever has been discussed as it is an internal matter."

On Monday, Bayan Baru member of parliament Datuk Seri Zahrain Mohamed Hashim had revealed that some independent members might not seek re-election in the next general election.

He said the matter was discussed during a recent meeting of the independent caucus.

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