

## **DAP lawmaker claims offered RM150,000 to run for BN in GE13**

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**By Debra Chong**

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 1 — A suspended Johor DAP assemblyman today revealed he had been offered RM150,000 and 50 acres of land to quit his party and stand as an independent candidate aligned to rival Barisan Nasional (BN) in the coming national polls.

First-term Bentayan state lawmaker Gwee Tong Hiang said he was approached last Tuesday by a Chinese man claiming to be a representative from the Prime Minister's Department who caught him while he was feeling down over his six-month suspension for alleged power abuse.

Gwee said though he was upset after being suspended he would not accept the BN offer. The allegation comes on the heels of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's latest charge to win back support from ethnic Chinese voters nationwide, following the dismal performance from the ruling coalition's Chinese parties, notably the MCA, which has been practically written off as irrelevant.

The allegation also recalls the controversial takeover of Perak, which was won in the 2008 general election by the PAS-DAP-PCR pact.

Jelapang MP and Perak state assembly Deputy Speaker Datuk Hee Yit Fong had quit the DAP to become a BN-friendly independent, tipping the balance in favour of the BN.

Najib, who is also BN chairman, carried out a whirlwind tour into enemy territory in DAP-controlled Penang last weekend, but support towards the BN government in Umno-controlled Johor appears to be eroding as well if Gwee's claim is to be believed.

Gwee told reporters the man, whom he named as Wee Pao Chin, had arranged for him to meet Najib in Putrajaya on Monday where the BN chairman would announce the news at a media conference.

He said the RM150,000 would be provided by Putrajaya and would be paid to him in one lump sum through the Wee clan association in order to avoid detection.

He also claimed that he was promised more than RM5,000 a month as extra funds and would be given an office and staff to take care of his constituents if he agreed to quit the DAP.

"Their terms were 'you must stand as independent candidate in the next election to fight DAP candidate'," Gwee, 44, disclosed at the DAP headquarters here today.

The Bentayan state seat is in the Bakri parliamentary constituency and was until 2008 an MCA stronghold. Gwee beat the MCA's Lee Chin Yong in the last general election with a comfortable 2,798-vote margin.

Asked why the BN wanted him as a candidate there for the next polls, Gwee said he was told: "Top management kau-tim [has been fixed]. MCA will not put a candidate in Bentayan constituency."

Gwee said he made an audio recording of his conversation yesterday with the alleged agent — carried out entirely in Mandarin — and handed out copies of the transcript, in Chinese and English, to back his claim.

A DAP member since 1990, Gwee said though he was upset after being suspended six months for alleged power abuse, he would not accept the BN offer.

“Although the past last week I’ve been very down...,” he managed to get out before breaking down into tears.

“I’m still a DAP man. The BN offering me this is not right. That’s why I expose it, to tell BN not every DAP ADUN or MP can be bought over. I love the DAP. My party is DAP,” he said in an emotion-choked voice.

He will be filing a police report later today in Muar and also plans to file a report with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in Batu Pahat.

DAP publicity chief Tony Pua, who was also at today’s conference, said the party will be seeking clarification from the Prime Minister’s Department and called on Najib to disclose if he had instructed his men to entice opposition representatives or investigate and act against imposters.

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