

## **Karpal steps down as DAP chairman**

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PETALING JAYA: DAP veteran Karpal Singh steps down as the party's chairman following his conviction under the Sedition Act recently.

Pending the appeal of his case, his deputy and Cheras MP, Tan Kok Wai will assume the DAP's chairmanship.

Karpal, who is also Bukit Gelugor MP, said that he would not want to apply to the Registrar of Societies to retain his party post, adding it would 'demean himself.'

"Under the circumstances, I am publicly announcing that I am stepping aside as DAP chairman, pending my appeal to the Court of Appeal against the conviction," said Karpal, at a press conference today.

Also present were DAP secretary general Lim Guan Eng, DAP state assemblymen Jagdeep Singh Deo (Datuk Keramat), who is also Karpal's son and Wong Hon Wai (Air Itam assemblyman).

On March 11, Karpal was found guilty of sedition for questioning the Perak ruler, Sultan Azlan Shah on his decision to remove former Perak menteri besar Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin from his post, in February 2009.

Karpal was subsequently fined RM4,000 by the Kuala Lumpur High Court under Section 4(1)(b) of the Sedition Act, which he describes as an "outdated and irrelevant legislation that is 66 years old and a sad relic of British colonialism".

Under Section 9(1)(b) of the Societies Act 1966, a person cannot remain an office-bearer, adviser or employee of a registered society if he has been convicted of any offence and slapped with a fine of more than RM2,000 or jail term more a year

"I cannot, until the conviction is set aside or the fine reduced to one under RM2,000, continue to remain as chairman of DAP," he said.

Karpal also pointed out that in light of both his and PKR supremo Anwar Ibrahim's conviction, the Dewan Rakyat has to make a decision on their fate under Article 53 (1) of the Federal Constitution.

The said article states that 'if any question arises whether a member of Parliament has become disqualified for membership, the decision of that House shall be taken and shall be final.

On March 7, the Court of Appeal overturned a high court's acquittal and sentenced Anwar to a five years imprisonment for sodomising his former aide, Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

The Permatang Pauh MP had since filed an appeal at the Federal Court on the matter.

Meanwhile, Lim said that DAP's door would remain open for Karpal's return to re-assume his party positions as an elected CEC member and national chairman later, after settling his appeal.

He also dispelled any notion that it was the end of Karpal's illustrious political career.

"This is not end of Karpal. He is obliged to do so because he wants to comply with the law. Even though we may not agree with law, especially the Sedition Act and provisions of ROS, we have to abide by the law," said the Penang chief minister.

Although saddened by Karpal's decision, Lim said that the party will stand by Karpal through the trying times.

"We shall wait for Karpal's return. Tan Kok Wai would only be the party acting national chairman," said Lim.

He added that he would recommend at the next central executive (CEC) meeting to adopt a resolution to keep Karpal's CEC position vacant.

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