

Rafizi reveals why Pakatan is split over potential PM
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BY ANISAH SHUKRY

For all its ambition of taking over Putrajaya, Pakatan Rakyat has still not agreed on who should be made prime minister, PKR strategy chief Rafizil Ramli told a forum last night.

He said that even a month before the 13th general election, PAS had rejected opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as the coalition's candidate.

"One month before the general election, PAS leaders Datuk Abdul Hadi Awang, Mohamad Sabu, Datuk Dr Harun Din, Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man and Datuk Mustafa Ali all met with Anwar.

"They told him they would nominate Umno's Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah as prime minister should we win Putrajaya," he said during the forum on the Selangor crisis at the Kuala Lumpur Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall.

He attributed this as one of the reasons why PKR had quickly initiated the "Kajang move" earlier this year without first holding discussions with its Islamist ally.

"I believed even if we discussed the issue (of removing Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim) with PAS, it would never be resolved.

"After all, after six years of discussing the prime minister candidate, we still have been unable to reach a consensus."

He later confirmed with The Malaysian Insider that Pakatan had yet to officially decide even till today who would be prime minister, mainly because of PAS's objections over Anwar.

"The official answer in the Pakatan council at first last year was that we will only decide (who will be prime minister) after we win Putrajaya.

"But then a month before elections last year, PAS and its top delegates came to say PAS had made its decision, that they would nominate Tengku Razaleigh."

He said Pakatan had no choice but to keep quiet over the matter that time, knowing full well that if they made public their disagreements, it could cost them the election.

"Because of that, we could not announce the prime minister candidate even until the end."

He said after they lost the general election, the coalition had never revisited the topic. But he said it was understood that PAS still did not endorse Anwar as prime minister.

Rafizi said he hoped the issue of whom would be prime minister should Pakatan win the next general election be resolved quickly.

"We have to settle the issue now, not four years down the line. That's why I think you can see that PAS is extremely stubborn at this point. But I don't think we can go in the next election by sweeping this problem under the carpet.

"Let's settle this once and for all, with the public. If PAS thinks that this disagreement warrants anything drastic on their part, so be it."

Hanipa Maidin of PAS (right) in a discussion with Rafizi Ramli during the Selangor crisis forum yesterday. – The Malaysian Insider pic by Nazir Sufari, August 6, 2014. Hanipa Maidin of PAS (right) in a discussion with Rafizi Ramli during the Selangor crisis forum yesterday. – The Malaysian Insider pic by Nazir Sufari, August 6, 2014. Meanwhile, PAS central committee member Mohamed Hanipa Maidin, who was also present at the forum, was shocked that PAS leaders wanted to nominate the Umno veteran as prime minister.

“Even though I am a PAS central committee member, I honestly had no idea about what Rafizi revealed.

“If I knew, I would have opposed it outright. I would like people to know that we in PAS want to bring in a new era of politics. We must understand that the public is watching us, we cannot act like we did 20 years ago.

“That’s why I myself want to say that what PAS did was unethical and un-Islamic.”

He said that the PAS leaders’ act of nominating someone outside of Pakatan to become prime minister last year was an act of betrayal to the party, their friends, and the public.

“We did not know. If we did, if (Shah Alam MP) Khalid Samad knew, we would have opposed it. I apologise to my friends in Pakatan.

“It is unethical, shameful, and I am deeply disappointed.”

Talk has been rife that Pakatan may soon break up, after PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang threw his support behind the embattled Selangor menteri besar, Khalid Ibrahim.

His endorsement of Khalid came just days after allies PKR and DAP openly declared they wanted him replaced, triggering a rift between the three opposition parties.

But, leaders from Pakatan last Saturday vowed the coalition would continue to work together and will resolve its problems as a united front.

Anwar, Hadi, and DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang said that Pakatan was committed to face the issues which has threatened to break up the opposition coalition.

"We are committed to face the issues that have cropped up collectively, courageously, with principles which we share together to fulfil the trust and responsibility given by the people to us," they said in a joint statement. – August 6, 2014.

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