

Headline	Johor Pakatan may unravel over Gelang Patah seat		
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# Johor Pakatan may unravel over Gelang Patah seat

**DAP-PKR RIVALRY:** All eyes on DAP dinner on Monday for hint on who will contest seat

**T**HE bespectacled man sounded jovial on the other end of the line. The sore throat, which he had been suffering from for the past two days, did not stop Dr Boo Cheng Hau from speaking to this writer.

He was excited about DAP's coming 47th anniversary to be celebrated in Skudai, Johor. Thousands — which is the propagandised description of how many would be gathering at the venue in Taman Sutera — will stand before top Pakatan Rakyat leaders.

DAP is now close to being 50 years old. It was founded by Singapore's former People's Action Party members in October 1965 and registered itself as a democratic socialist party a year later.

As the Johor DAP chief, Dr Boo needs no introduction. By now he is wellknown for his spat with his state Parti Ke-adilan Rakyat (PKR) counterpart, the slick-haired Datuk Chua Jui Meng.

The tussle for the Chinese-majority Gelang Patah parliamentary seat between DAP and PKR is yet to reach an end, unless this writer is

not correctly informed on the issue by party insiders.

However, political observers noted that the claim for what is touted as a winnable seat for Pakatan, is eroding the coalition's unity at the state level, with Johor

Pas commissioner Datuk Mahfodz Mohamed's offer to mediate in the squabble ignored.

Accusations of Chua committing subversive acts against Johor DAP have also yet to recede, as the dissolution of Parliament nears. It is no longer an open secret that everything is not fine and dandy down south.

Nevertheless, Dr Boo gave his best showmanship of public relations skills when asked if Chua was invited to the DAP anniversary gathering on Monday. Perhaps, it was a show of a political camaraderie, with a tinge of comical sarcasm.

"Who? Oh (you are talking about) my best friend! Yes, of course, I invited him. I do not want to be so petty over it (the Johor DAP-PKR

row). As far as I'm concerned, we are okay now. No more fighting.

"I've talked to him recently and everything is all right now. We should be looking at the bigger picture," said Dr Boo, implying that he wanted to be the better man in resolving the fiasco.

Well, that's what he said, since his "friend" has yet to return the three phone calls made to his mobile phone for a comment. Perhaps Chua is still hurt or ruminating on the consequences stemming from the controversy.

His credibility has also been described as "suspect" by DAP stalwart Karpal Singh. Dr Boo's deputy and loyalist Norman Fernandez has reduced Chua's ostensible behaviour to being akin to that of a "kindergartener".

The strained relationship between the leaders of Johor PKR and DAP may not appear to be at its lowest ebb now but, at the same time, it reeks of uncertainty as the

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ruckus had become full-blown in the media.

It is understood that the state DAP's ego was initially bruised when Chua made a move to lobby for the Gelang Patah seat, which is now being held by Barisan Nasional's Tan Ah Heng after defeating PKR's Dr Zalina Mustafa by more than a 8,000-vote majority in 2008.

"DAP wants that seat because the party will have a bigger chance to win it. The seat used to be theirs before they 'leased' it to PKR.

"PKR had lost the seat twice and now they want Chua to contest it,"

said Universiti Utara Malaysia's Dr Muhammad Fuad Othman.

Both Dr Boo and Chua have been told by their respective party leaders, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng and PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, not to comment further on the issue.

It is expected that during the DAP anniversary gathering in Skudai, which is under the Gelang Patah parliamentary constituency, Dr Boo and Chua will hold each other's hands to form the usual "human chain of unity" with other Pakatan leaders.

Both will pose with a wide smile

or a brotherly hug before the battery of cameras. They will chant the "Ubah" (change) mantra in unison and pump their fists in the air in an affectionate display of togetherness.

But no one can be certain if both men have actually found an amicable solution to the feud, even if a special announcement on who will actually contest the Gelang Patah seat is made that night. Time can heal the pain, but that is the luxury neither the state DAP nor PKR can afford now.

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**Datuk Chua Jui Meng** has been invited to the DAP anniversary dinner on Monday



**Dr Boo Cheng Hau** calls Chua his 'best friend' and says 'everything is all right now in Johor Pakatan'