

**Azmin's men likely to 'balance' veep line-up**  
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With the dust finally settling on the dramatic party polls which concluded in November, PKR now faces the task of deciding who among those who fell deserve to be on the central leadership committee.

Of top interest would be the two vacant vice-presidential positions, which the party constitution allows the president to fill.

nik nazmi nik ahmad book launch 210310 03Tight-lipped party communication director Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad (left) refused to entertain any speculation, saying that the supreme council will decide the matter only on Saturday.

"The decision will be announced soon after the meeting," he said, adding that it is reasonable to expect some changes in central positions with the advent of new leaders.

Last month PKR announced Azmin Ali as the new deputy president, replacing incumbent Syed Husin Ali, and he is likely to appoint those seen to be loyal to him during the heated battle for the number two post.

This is especially because out of the four elected vice-presidents - Mansor Othman and Fuziah Salleh - have had signalled that they are backing Azmin as deputy president.

The other two Nurul Izzah Anwar and Tian Chua who garnered the most votes in the recent party polls, have not visibly shown their support for Azmin.

The two appointed vice-presidents (VP) are seats traditionally used to allow representation from all the major ethnic communities at the top leadership level.

Xavier a shoo-in

For example, the previous vice-president line up comprised Azmin Ali and Mustaffa Kamil Ayub representing the Malay community, Sivarasa Rasiah filling the unofficial Indian quota, Lee Boon Chye for the Chinese community and Jeffrey Kitingan representing East Malaysia.

With Sivarasa not making the cut, and apparently declining reappointment, his seat can be allocated to any of the other ethnic Indian VP candidates - N Gobalakrishnan, S Manikavasagam, Xavier Jeyakumar and R Suresh Kumar.

Pundits, however, have tipped Xavier as the chosen one as his apparent steadfast loyalty to the new deputy president makes him a shoo-in to play the role of 'balancing' the vice-presidential cohort.

The Sri Andalas assemblyperson is believed to be a better candidate than closest vice-president contender Padang Serai MP Gobalakrishnan, who had previously spoken out against Azmin.

NONEFollowing this pattern, Sarawak chief Baru Bian's (right) recent commendations of Azmin could signal that the former would be roped in to take up the remaining position on the veep line-up.

Where will Mustaffa go?

Despite being badly beaten in the deputy president race, Mustaffa Kamil Ayub remains a valued leader in the PKR and is likely to be compensated with a central appointment, but the exact position remains a mystery.

His experience as one-time secretary-general may indicate that he could take over from incumbent Saifuddin Nasution, but party insiders believe that there is no likelihood of a major shake-up in the light of the looming general election.

"The concern is about strengthening the state machineries so if any changes take place it will be at state level with state chiefs in places like Perlis, Terengganu and Pahang being replaced," said a source.

However, it remains to be seen if strategies director Chua and election director Fuziah will be replaced in these positions that are pivotal in preparing for snap polls, now that they have been elected vice presidents.

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