

Selangor MB Khalid to move to Port Klang?

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Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim might not be defending his Ijok state assembly seat in the coming polls, with the Port Klang state assembly seat being touted as a likely destination.

According to sources familiar with PKR's election committee and seat allocations in the state, there is fear among some sections of Selangor PKR that Abdul Khalid might not retain the Ijok seat should he decide to contest there again.

This is believed to be due to the strains of his job as MB, which has rendered him unable to be consistently present in Ijok.

Under the Kuala Selangor PKR division, it has been known for infighting over the past few years.

Abdul Khalid is also believed to have been receiving a cold response from the constituents when he does pay visits there, with turnouts at events being less than encouraging.

Party sources also said that Abdul Khalid was even jeered by a crowd during a recent event, leading the party to really question the support that he has in the constituency.

A few alternatives

Abdul Khalid won Ijok by a majority of 1,920 votes in 2008 against Umno's Mohamed Sayuti Said, and the constituency consists of 50 percent Malay voters, 32 percent Indians, and 18 percent Chinese.

While there are a few alternatives that are currently being weighed up, Abdul Khalid might be fielded by the party in Port Klang in an attempt to show the voters that the PKR still takes the seat seriously.

PKR won the seat in 2008, but its representative Badrul Hisham Abdullah quit the party just one year later, before joining Umno in 2010. However, Badrul has not serviced the state constituency well, leaving the bulk of the responsibility on the shoulders of DAP's Klang MP Charles Santiago.

Previously, there were speculations that PKR president Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who has expressed openness to contest a state seat in Selangor, would be contesting in Port Klang, but according to party insiders, as per the latest round of talks, no seat has been decided for Wan Azizah yet in the state.

The party also sees fielding Abdul Khalid in Port Klang as strategic because Abdul Khalid had

just recently announced that the state would build the third Klang bridge, which was promised by BN during its 2008 election campaign but never fulfilled thereafter.

Badrul Hisham won the seat in 2008 by a rather encouraging majority of 4,407 votes against Umno's Roselinda Abdul Jalil.

The seat has 51 percent Malay voters, 28 percent Chinese, and 18 percent Indians.

Striking a balance

The proximity between Port Klang and the state leadership headquarters in Shah Alam, should Abdul Khalid retain the MB's post, could also help the latter balance between his MB duties and also at the same time serving his state constituency.

However, Abdul Khalid's political secretary Faekah Husin (left) said that as far as she is concerned, Abdul Khalid will still contest in Ijok.

She is understood to be one of the few state PKR members who are of the belief that Abdul Khalid can retain the Ijok seat, and she said that had received no instructions from the top leadership about Abdul Khalid contesting elsewhere.

"As far as I am concerned, he will still be in Ijok. We have received no instructions otherwise," she said.

On another note, some of the PKR grassroots in Ijok are known to have disgruntlements against Khalid due to both his failure to take care of the constituency, and factionalism within Selangor PKR.

It is learnt that supporters of his rival camp in Selangor PKR were part of the problems in the Ijok PKR division.

Determined to defend his seat

Another source close to Khalid's office, however, pointed out that being a principled maverick who is not savvy in party politics, the corporate leader-turned-politician is determined to defend his seat instead of taking other 'safe seats'.

Hence, he and his team have been sweating in Ijok in the previous six months, making frequent visits to the constituency and accelerating their efforts to solve local problems.

However, some supporters who were concerned about his chances in Ijok are lobbying him to move to Bukit Lanjan, a Chinese-majority urban seat won by state exco member Elizabeth Wong by 5,155 votes, which is considered as a PKR 'safe seat'.

Wong may be 'upgraded' to the parliamentary constituency of Petaling Jaya Selatan held by Hee Loy Sian, who is said to have failed to perform during his five-year tenure.

Last night, PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim told international TV channel Al-Jazeera that Wan Azizah will not be contesting any seat in the general election.

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