

## **Anwar: There was never a Khalid-Azmin 'deal'**

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INTERVIEW Despite much speculation, PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim said that no condition was set by Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim when he agreed to the controversial 'Kajang Move'.

As such, he said, it is "untrue" and "unfair to Khalid" to speculate that he will dig his heels in and not budge from the MB's post if Selangor PKR chief Azmin Ali (right) does not vacate his Bukit Antarabangsa seat in the Selangor legislative assembly.

"If you know Khalid, (you would know) he is not that type. Not only is (the speculation) incorrect, but it is not fair to Khalid.

"Of course he expresses his views, but to put (conditions) of this and that, no," he said in an interview with Malaysiakini today.

He was responding to a report in The Star, quoting sources close to the MB, that Khalid will not budge until Azmin vacates his state seat.

Likewise, he said, there was no understanding with Azmin, who is also PKR deputy president, that he would take over as menteri besar after the 14th general election, which can be called as early as 2016.

Asked directly on this, he said: "No. Even with Khalid, I said, 'your services are required' while to Azmin, I said 'we need to work together'."

"People say, 'Anwar is a politician, he makes deals'. No. That is why I am a bit curious how this Star report came about," he said.

He also denied that this could be a way for Khalid to "save face", if he has to step aside before completing his second term in office.

"It depends on how we deal with him. Not only now but (what happens) afterwards is important. He is not advised ... to leave because he was incompetent or failed. No. He did well."

It just that, he said, Khalid's nature means he does not have the political acumen

required to stave off attacks by the BN to wrest the nation's so-called crown jewel state.

The PKR-dubbed 'Kajang Move' refers to the resignation of the Kajang assemblyperson to pave the way for Anwar's entry into the state legislative assembly.

Although Anwar insists that Khalid will remain MB "for now", it is seen by many as a move to eventually replace Khalid as menteri besar.

'Why talk of feudalism now?'

The bold strategy came as the internal dispute between Abdul Khalid and Azmin took an ugly and public turn, with Azmin's termination from the Selangor State Development Corporation board of directors.

The feud also made public grousers from certain factions on alleged "feudalism", or the grip on the party by Anwar and his family, through his wife and party president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ibrahim (right), and daughter and vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar.

Sighing before answering the question, Anwar, who appeared almost saddened by the whole thing, said it just does not make sense now when Wan Azizah has already indicated she will retire.

Having held to her post uncontested in PKR's inaugural 'one member one vote' polls in 2011, Wan Azizah is expected to stay out of the PKR elections this April.

"At the time (when Wan Azizah entered politics following Anwar's incarceration), there was a vacuum, and everybody wanted it and she had to struggle at the time.

"Now, when everything is in order, everybody is either a menteri besar or an assemblyperson, you want to talk about feudalism - after 15 years?" he asked.

This he said, has hurt his wife who despite more than a decade in politics is not immune to its twists and turns.

"She asks 'Why? I have been working (all these years) and then suddenly people talk about feudalism. I have indicated I am leaving, and then it becomes feudal.'

"It's okay. We just have to be patient. As prison was not a bed of roses, this job is truly not something comforting. I am okay," he said.

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