

Nik Nazmi: Selangor under attack, Anwar needed
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INTERVIEW Selangor needs PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim because the state has come under severe political attacks by the BN in the last few months, Selangor legislative assembly deputy speaker Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad said.

Despite the brickbats, Nik Nazmi said, Anwar should be given a fair chance in contesting the Kajang state seat because it would formalise his involvement in state affairs, beyond being the economic advisor to Selangor.

Toeing PKR's official position, Nik Nazmi (right) rejected talk that Anwar intends to take over the post of Selangor menteri besar from Abdul Khalid Ibrahim.

"Let it be ... Khalid is still menteri besar. Anwar is the candidate for the Kajang by-election," he said in an interview.

"We need to use him, his strength, his experience and leverage in order to face the challenges in Selangor and boost our task of getting to Putrajaya.

"It is an unusual route, but we must have the courage to make this bold decision, as unpopular as it may be."

Nik Nazmi, a former political secretary to Khalid, had also previously served as PKR communications director. He is the Seri Setia assemblyperson.

It would not be unusual for Anwar to hold a state seat in addition to his other portfolios, Nik Nazmi said, noting that Khalid, Azmin and Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng are also juggling roles as parliamentarians and state assemblypersons.

"For me, this issue does not arise. Sure, (Anwar) will have another responsibility (should he win Kajang), but if it needs to be carried out, it is not a big pressure.

"Importantly, we have a good team to support Anwar at every level, so it won't be a problem for the people."

'A pivotal step to Putrajaya'

Nik Nazmi agreed with PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli's position that this is a

pivotal step for the party in getting to Putrajaya in the next general election.

"Selangor is like the New York or the California of Malaysia ... it is here where it all happens. If we succeed in Selangor, it will have an impact," he said.

Nik Nazmi denied that the 'Kajang Move' was an attempt to solve problems within PKR.

"The threat is external - from Umno and its NGOs that try to raise the heat," he said.

For instance, he said, the federal government has been poking into Selangor's affairs, such as the water restructuring plan and the raid on the Bible Society of Malaysia, making these issues difficult to resolve.

Anwar surprised many when his candidacy was announced for Kajang, a seat vacated for him by party loyalist Lee Chin Cheh (right).

Lee's resignation came a week after Anwar criticised Khalid's decision to drop PKR deputy president Azmin Ali from the Selangor Development Corporation.

Azmin has been known to be eyeing the position of menteri besar since the general election last year.

Many have therefore speculated that Anwar had stepped in to quell the splitting of Selangor PKR into the Khalid and Azmin camps.

"Differences in opinions (within PKR) are normal. I think Khalid has contributed very well and, at the same time, Selangor has shown that we do not want a rubber-stamp state assembly," said Nik Nazmi.

"So that's why our backbenchers are very vocal, sometimes more vocal than the opposition. We (Pakatan Rakyat) have three-quarters strength in the state assembly. While check-and-balance is important, it (the fight within) is not so serious as portrayed."

However, Nik Nazmi, who is eyeing the position of PKR Youth in upcoming PKR elections, declined to respond when asked which camp he belongs to.

