

Wan Azizah thrashes claim she'll be a puppet MB
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PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who appears ready to take on the job of menteri besar of Selangor, today dismissed allegations that she will be a "puppet" in the seat.

"Well, he (her husband Anwar Ibrahim) was in jail when I was elected (party) president," Wan Azizah said when met in Permatang Nibong, Seberang Jaya.

Speaking for the first time on the appointment touted for her, she said, "They can criticise whatever they want, but we have a team and teamwork is what we emphasise on."

Wan Azizah was Permatang Pauh MP for two terms when Anwar, the PKR de facto leader, was in jail for sodomy.

She said the decision for her to be Selangor menteri besar has been made, as announced by Anwar.

'It is service to the people that is important'

"It's a heavy responsibility, but one must do it for the sake of the rakyat," she said. "All the positions I hold are a responsibility. Even without a position, it is service to the people that is important."

Criticism of Wan Azizah began after speculation became rife that she would replace Khalid.

Anwar finally announced last week that PKR had, by consensus, agreed to Wan Azizah replacing Khalid as Selangor menteri besar. Khalid is expected to vacate his post after the Aidil Fitri celebrations.

Umno and some PAS members are uncomfortable with a woman menteri besar, although DAP is supportive of the change.

Khalid himself is adamant to stay on, saying he would complete his term, and on this he is supported by the PAS leaders, including party president Abdul Hadi Awang and spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

Khalid's imminent removal and Wan Azizah's appointment to his post has opened up the possibility of the break-up of the Pakatan Rakyat coalition, although Anwar has dismissed the matter, saying "there is no indication of it".

Anwar also said Pakatan leaders were committed to the coalition due to its long

cooperation, which helped the opposition retain Penang, Selangor and Kelantan in the 13th general election last year.

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