

In MB crisis, all eyes now on palace and PAS

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Even though PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail claimed a majority in the state assembly earlier today following the support of two PAS representatives, there are still major hurdles that she and her party need to clear with the Selangor palace and PAS.

The relationship between Wan Azizah as well as PKR and the Selangor palace and PAS would come under increasing scrutiny over the next few days, which could decide the fate of the state's leadership.

Central to this is whether PKR and its de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim would be willing to submit a second candidate for the MB post.

The Selangor palace had already rejected Wan Azizah's request for an audience with the sultan earlier this week as it did not wish to delve into PKR's internal affairs.

The Kajang assemblyperson had penned a second letter today seeking an audience to inform the monarch of the majority that she holds in the state assembly to oust current MB Khalid Ibrahim.

With the latest development, there have been calls for the sultan to instruct Khalid to resign given that Wan Azizah has majority support.

However, PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali yesterday said he "heard" that the palace had rejected Wan Azizah's candidacy as MB, and thus the party was also seeking for PKR to submit a second candidate.

Fresh state election

If the Selangor palace does not grant Wan Azizah an audience at the second time asking, PKR and DAP might need to wait until the state assembly convenes again in November in order to push through a vote of no confidence and remove Khalid.

A hung assembly could prompt the sultan to dissolve the state assembly and call for fresh polls.

Pakatan insiders have become increasingly wary of the prospect of a snap polls as they believe PAS and PKR would suffer major losses compared to the 13th general election.

Key to avoiding this would be to ensure PAS' support alongside PKR and DAP for the MB change.

Malaysiakini previously reported that a meeting between top PAS leaders last Sunday arrived at four conclusions - to stay in Pakatan Rakyat, to withdraw support for Khalid, to reject Wan Azizah and request a second name from PKR to be submitted.

This brought to fore the name of Azmin Ali, the PKR deputy president and Selangor PKR chief who has been eyeing the MB post for quite some time.

A meeting between PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang and Anwar in Kuala Terengganu on Monday had failed to break the deadlock, and the party's political bureau would hold a crucial meeting tonight before proposing their conclusions for the all-important central committee meeting this Sunday.

Sources from Anwar's inner circle have admitted that the PKR leader might not succeed in pushing through Wan Azizah's candidacy after all due to possible resistance from the palace and PAS.

Malaysiakini understands that PAS leaders are also increasingly unhappy with PKR strategist Rafizi Ramli and secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution for publicly insisting that PKR does not consider any other candidate apart from Wan Azizah for the MB post.

However, if PAS could finally reach an agreement with PKR after backing Khalid previously and throw their support for the MB change, Khalid's independently run government could collapse with the withdrawal of four remaining PAS exco members.

According to sources, Pakatan's presidential council might hold a meeting right after the PAS central committee meeting on Sunday in another bid to reach an agreement that has eluded all three Pakatan components.

A strong show of support from all Pakatan parties could then lead to a new MB being appointed while averting a state election.

The state ruler, Sharafuddin Idris Shah, would return from his overseas trip on Aug 23 and Pakatan would be hopeful of reaching a consensus on the matter before this.

The Kajang move

Attempts to replace Khalid as the MB of the state has now dragged on for nearly six months.

In February, PKR initiated the 'Kajang Move' by triggering the resignation of assemblyperson Lee Chin Cheh to pave way for a by-election in Kajang and install Anwar as the MB replacing Khalid.

However, Anwar was disqualified from contesting the by-election following his sodomy conviction at the Court of Appeal in March, and Wan Azizah, his wife, stood in his stead and

returned as an elected representative.

Khalid remained as MB thereafter but overtures to replace him gathered momentum again after his controversial water deal with the federal government and approval for expressways in the state increased unhappiness on his leadership among PKR and DAP leaders.

After a protracted period, PKR decided that Wan Azizah would be its MB candidate but Khalid refused to step down, asking his party to follow "procedures".

Things were made murkier when PAS, through its president Abdul Hadi openly supported Khalid to remain at the helm.

PKR issued a show-cause letter to Khalid for his refusal to step down and later sacked him from the party.

Despite that, Khalid obtained consent from the ruler earlier this week to remain as MB, and proceeded to sack PKR and DAP excos while retaining the four PAS excos.

Khalid has today refused to change his stand despite Wan Azizah's majority claim, stating that it must be translated into a vote of no confidence in the state assembly.

Selangor crisis today

11.17am: Two PAS assemblypersons pledge support for Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as MB, giving her majority support of the House.

12:42pm: PKR exco member Rodziah resigns.

12.58pm: Exco member confirms that PKR, DAP S'gor councillors will not lose their jobs.

1.46pm: Khalid refuses to budge until a no confidence vote is called.

2pm: PAS Hulu Kelang rep Saari Sungib ready to leave party for Pakatan.

4.16pm: PAS gives pro-Wan Azizah reps 24 hours to retract stand or face action.

5.30pm: DAP claims Khalid may call snap polls in November.

5.42pm: Lim Kit Siang tells Khalid to resign for misleading sultan on majority support.

5.45pm: Law experts say no assembly sitting required to oust Khalid as MB.

11.24pm: PAS denies claims that it is rejecting Wan Azizah because she is a woman, but won't reveal its reasons.

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