

## **PAS' double nomination puts PKR in a bind**

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PAS' decision to back both PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and her deputy Azmin Ali to become the new menteri besar of Selangor has put PKR in a quandary.

For weeks, PKR has insisted that Wan Azizah is their sole candidate for the post while PAS threw their weight behind the now independent MB Abdul Khalid Ibrahim.

Now that PAS has finally decided in favour of Pakatan Rakyat and the coalition is on the verge of finding a consensus that has eluded them thus far, it remains to be seen if PKR would be willing to make concessions or would it still insist on a sole candidate.

Though PAS would still back Wan Azizah as MB as per the party's central committee's decision, their move to nominate Azmin puts pressure on PKR to name a second candidate when they send their list to the Selangor palace.

Previously, PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali himself claimed to have "heard" that the Selangor palace rejected Wan Azizah as the new MB for the state.

Hurdle for Azmin, third candidate?

This puts the spotlight back on the possibility of Azmin, who is also the Selangor PKR chief, entering the fray.

The biggest hurdle for Azmin would likely come from within his own party, especially those behind the Kajang move such as secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution and strategist Rafizi Ramli have been insistent on Wan Azizah and closing the door on other candidates.

It is also understood that some members of Anwar Ibrahim's inner circle are not in favour of Azmin becoming MB either.

As such, the next few hours would be crucial as PKR top leaders meet before the Pakatan presidential council sits for a meeting that could finally end the imbroglio in Selangor... at least until the sultan returns from abroad on Aug 27.

Wan Azizah now has the support from all Pakatan components to become the next MB, but speculation that the palace has rejected her, coupled with PAS' early resistance to her candidature remain key considerations for Pakatan, and especially PKR leaders.

Could this be a Catch 22 situation for PKR?

Nominating Wan Azizah could be rejected by the palace whereas submitting Azmin's name could ruffle the feathers of certain quarters in PKR.

So would this lead to the possibility of PKR, which has in total 13 state assemblypersons, naming another candidate?

PKR and DAP leaders relieved with decision

DAP, on the other hand, is understood to be agreeable to either Wan Azizah or Azmin, putting the ball firmly in PKR's court.

Malaysiakini understands that senior leaders from PKR and DAP expressed "relief" with PAS' decision, which means there might now be room for discussion among the coalition partners.

The Pakatan presidential council is expected to call a press conference at 6.30pm after a crucial few hours of deliberation.

As for Khalid, the embattled menteri besar said following PAS' decision, he would meet the ruler upon his return to discuss the next step.

Given PAS' support to replace Khalid, he no longer commands a majority in the 56-member state assembly.

However, Khalid still has the authority to request for a dissolution of the state assembly and call for a fresh state elections, which could scupper all plans by Pakatan to replace him directly.

With the protracted internal crisis said to have eroded Pakatan's support, there is fear in the opposition bloc that the state could fall to BN should a snap polls be held.

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