

PKR No 1: Abdul Rahman to take on Anwar
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Muda Mohd Noor

Fireworks are expected at the Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) congress on May 25 as its stalwart Anwar Ibrahim will face a challenge in the race to be president.

Keadilan former deputy president Abdul Rahman Othman today confirmed that he will vie for the top post.

He told malaysiakini that he reached the decision after considering the wishes of the members who wanted him to stand in the elections.

Abdul Rahman said he received sufficient nominations from the party divisions to contest for the post. However, he could not provide an exact figure of the nominations received.

Meanwhile, Anwar has not confirmed if he will contest for the post but observers claim that this is a forgone conclusion.

The former deputy premier is also facing a legal hurdle since his five-year ban from active politics will only expire next April.

PKR, which was formed in the wake of his sacking from government in 1998, is currently helmed by his wife Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

Straight fight

Abdul Rahman said he is not sure who will challenge him during the party elections but expressed hope for a straight fight.

"I want a straight fight, not a three-cornered fight. I don't know who - whether husband or wife - will challenge me," he added in reference to Anwar and Wan Azizah.

Wan Azizah, however, has said previously that she will step down to allow her husband to take over the opposition party.

Abdul Rahman had to vacate the deputy president's post when PKR was formed following the merger of two parties - Keadilan and Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM) - in 2003.

The deputy president post went to former PRM president Dr Syed Husin Ali while Abdul Rahman was demoted to treasurer. He later resigned from this post.

"This turn of events had angered his supporters. Abdul Rahman has a strong following, especially in Kedah," said one observer.

"Although some of the divisions there had nominated Anwar, they expressed tacit support for Abdul Rahman as well," he added.

It is learnt that the PKR supreme council will meet tomorrow night and subsequently issue a list of those nominated for the various posts.

Following this, offer letters will be sent to the respective individuals to determine if they are willing to contest or not.

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