

PKR contest: Forget it, ROS tells Anwar
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The Registrar of Societies (ROS) today rejected an application by Anwar Ibrahim seeking an exception to contest for the PKR president's post tomorrow.

The PKR advisor is legally barred from active politics until April 14, 2008, following his conviction for abuse of power.

However, the decision by ROS will not deter Anwar from contesting for the top post.

According to his aide Sim Tze Tzin, Anwar will not withdraw from the race and would be facing his wife Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and former PKR deputy president Abdul Rahman Othman.

Sim also said that Anwar will appeal the ROS decision, adding that there is a precedent in allowing convicted politicians to be involved in politics right after their release.

Anwar's appeal now lies with Home Affairs Minister Radzi Sheikh Ahmad.

"He will go ahead and contest," said Sim at the sidelines of the party congress in Seremban today.

"Anwar received the notice from ROS at 4.20pm and immediately after, he made an appeal to Radzi", said Sim.

The Societies Act provided for the Home Minister to grant Anwar a waiver.

PKR Information Chief Tian Chua today said the ROS decision was a "deliberate ploy to prevent the re-emergence of Anwar into active political leadership".

Wan Azizah's move?

The latest development has also put into question the earlier speculation that Wan Azizah would withdraw to pave the way for a straight fight between her husband and Rahman.

Prior to the ROS announcement, Wan Azizah hinted that she might pull out from the race although she avoided giving a direct answer on the matter.

"Well, at the moment I am still in the contest. As of now, I am still defending my post, I am still the incumbent," she told malaysiakini when contacted.

Asked if her decision will depend on Rahman's move tomorrow, she replied: "It (her candidacy) is a strategy move... Let's see."

It was earlier speculated that Rahman will turn to the courts to stop Anwar from contesting after failing in his earlier protest to the party's election committee to disqualify Anwar.

However, Rahman denied that he will resort to legal action.

Yesterday, malaysiakini reported that Wan Azizah might pull out from the contest in order to present the 1,775 delegates with a 'clearer' choice on who to vote for.

This, as some argued, is due to fears that there might be a split in votes for the couple, resulting in a favourable situation for Rahman instead.

Two other PKR leaders, vice-president R Sivarasa and Wanita chief Fuziah Salleh, have also indicated that Wan Azizah will pull out.

Sivarasa was quoted in the China Press today as saying that Wan Azizah will "give way" to her husband while Fuziah told reporters this morning that there will not be a "husband and wife fight tomorrow".

Wan Azizah has been the party president since PKR's inception in 1999, following the sacking of Anwar from government.

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