

Khalid is the new PKR sec-gen
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Just hours after elected leaders assumed their news posts, PKR's 'de facto president' Anwar Ibrahim revealed the list of newly appointed office bearers.

Anwar, who is officially the PKR advisor, announced the new line-up in his winding-up speech at the end of the PKR congress this afternoon. Usually such appointments are made only after the newly elected supreme council had met.

The appointments include R Sivarasa and Dr Jeffrey Kitingan to the two appointed vice-president posts and ex-treasurer Khalid Ibrahim as the new secretary-general, taking over from Kamarul Bahrin Abas.

Sivarasa, who did not defend his vice-presidency in this party elections, has been elected in as a supreme council member earlier while Jeffrey, who is Sabah PKR deputy chief, withdrew from the vice-presidency race yesterday.

Khalid's position as a treasurer will be taken over by newcomer William Leong, who was the party's election committee chief while Tian Chua remained as the information chief.

Azmin Ali was again named as the election bureau chief, to be assisted by former Wanita chief Fuziah Salleh, who was defeated in the vice-presidency race.

Cheers for Saifuddin

The new appointments also saw a comeback to PKR politics for former party vice-president and ex-Lunas state assemblyperson Saifuddin Nasution Ismail.

Despite not holding any party positions, he has been recruited into the party's influential political bureau - which consisted of top party leaders - and will be made the 'PKR strategy director'.

The 500-odd delegates welcomed him with cheers and applause as Saifuddin - who wore sunglasses due to an eye sore - emerged from the back of the hall and walked towards the stage, shaking hands with the delegates along the way. Anwar explained to the delegates that the appointments were made so soon to allow the new office bearers to immediately carry out their duties in view of a possible snap election.

"This is unprecedented, but from the response and applause from the delegates here, I think this is an endorsement to the new line-up," he said to cheers from the delegates.

According to party's constitution, the appointment of new office bearers are to be done by the party president with the consent of the supreme council.

Explaining on this later in a press conference, Anwar said the views of the new supreme council members have been sought.

"This is why we had to circulate a resolution and sign it, except for one or two who were

overseas or just left... I wanted to use the opportunity and the blessings of the president (Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail) to do it fast," he told reporters.

Lack of Chinese representation?

Meanwhile, when asked on the concern of delegates over the lack of Chinese representation in the party's line-up, Anwar said race was not a factor in electing leaders, but the hardwork put in by them.

"For example, like (vice-president Dr Lee) Boon Chye. He is seen all over campaigning and working on issues. He is well known. The same goes to Dominique Ng (supreme council member who scored highest votes)," he replied.

On how he wanted to bring back those who disagreed with his last-minute pull out from the party's presidency race yesterday, Anwar replied in jest:

"I brought back the president, she wasn't happy too because she was ready to hand over (the post)... but we had to let it be. As you know Tian Chua was in black attire (last night as a mark of protest)"

He however reiterated that he did not want the party to be distracted from preparing for the general election by facing possible de-registration if he had been chosen as the president.

The ROS had rejected Anwar's application for an exemption on his five-year ban from active politics and warned actions could be taken against him and the party if they defy the ruling.

Quizzed on why he accepted the nominations for the top post if he had anticipated the ROS to reject his application, Anwar replied: "I didn't anticipate that, I thought the ROS will allow my application because Prime Minister (Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) is my friend from Penang"

"I didn't know they want to hold any grudge and want to torture someone for eight, nine years..." he added.

To another question, he said Saifuddin's comeback was a boost to the party as the latter has been active on the ground, engaging with grassroots supporters.

But when asked on whether he would persuade ex-Youth chief Ezam Mohd Nor to come back, Anwar said: "Ezam is currently focusing on (corruption watchdog) Gerak, I have no problem when he is ready."