

**Khalid gets some breathing space**  
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Though having a reputation of being clean and carrying with him decades of corporate experience, it hasn't been easy for Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim over the past few months.

save tian chua dinner 200610 khalid ibrahim 02Dissatisfaction by grassroots over his alleged weaknesses as a menteri besar, coupled with grassroots dissatisfaction that they were not given lucrative contracts and government positions, came to boiling point at the PKR congress last month.

The latest round of assaults came in the form of PKR vice-president Azmin Ali's resignation as the Selangor Development Board (PKNS) director, sparking rumours that he was leading a group of 15 PKR MPs (G15) to topple Khalid (left).

Following this, the party held a retreat today in Shah Alam involving PKR's national leadership and all elected representatives, ostensibly to prepare for the next general election.

In the end, a minor but significant reshuffle took place with party president Dr Wan Azizah Ismail replacing Khalid with Azmin as Selangor PKR chief.

The move is likely to give Khalid some breathing space, allowing the relatively popular menteri besar to continue his agenda while granting Azmin more say in state PKR policy.

#### Conflicting accounts

Officially, the party never intended to dissect Khalid's position during the retreat today.

Party communications chief Latheefa Koya said that during the retreat, leaders were broken into groups to discuss strategy and other issues.

bukit antarabangsa landslide 071209 zuraida kamaruddinHowever, when approached, PKR Wanita chief Zuraida Kamaruddin (left) admitted that the problems the retreat was looking to rectify indirectly stem from the weaknesses of the Selangor leadership.

"Indirectly, yes. However, he (Khalid) is not the only one responsible. We will all have to work together to fix the situation," said Zuraida, who is also Ampang MP.

Chief amongst these weaknesses, she mentioned, are in PKR's communications machinery at both national and state levels.

PKR elections director Fuziah Salleh said there were calls by retreat participants for Khalid to "follow party guidelines", adding that the latter was doing a fine job of that so far.

"He has shown improvement, especially after the events of the last party congress," she said.

Azmin to spearhead Umno attack?

But despite Khalid's so called "improvement", it would seem that the party has decided that the weaknesses of his administration, whether indirect or not, needs to be rectified immediately.

The first step was to relieve Khalid of his duties as Selangor party chief to allow him to concentrate on administrating the state.

The second move was to place party officials - including Sabak Bernam PKR chief and notable firebrand cleric Badrul Amin Baharom - in Khalid's office to help boost the state government's communications efforts.

The moves are likely to grant the state government and state PKR leadership more firepower to attack the Umno-led opposition, which has been relatively ignored by the confrontation-shy Khalid.

Party members see this as an important issue as Umno has been constantly voicing its desires to reclaim the state after losing it to Pakatan in the last general election.

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