

**No happy ending to PKR power struggle**  
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NEWS ANALYSIS The cameras caught the smiles flashed at the PKR retreat last weekend, but the event proved to be less than a happy one, as a simmering power struggle came to the boil.

The outcome has not left either of the main players, Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim and party vice-president Azmin Ali, in a favourable position.

NONE For Khalid (right), losing the Selangor party chief's position to Azmin has allowed him the luxury of 'outsourcing' the making of political decisions, a shortcoming that he willingly concedes.

But it also means losing a vital and powerful party role and opening himself up to even greater pressure from Azmin as the new state party chief.

A silver lining for Khalid, however, is the unequivocal backing of PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim.

According to party sources, Anwar broke his silence on the 'tussle' during the leadership council meeting following the party retreat on Sunday, placing himself squarely on the MB's side.

A source, who refused to be identified, said Anwar had threatened to refer those who openly challenge Khalid's role as MB, to the PKR disciplinary committee.

azmin ali pc in parliament 020709 02Azmin's new appointment seems to be a minor victory for someone often described as 'ambitious', as well as a stepping stone to the MB's post. However, it is understood that the man himself is less thrilled.

"It was actually a directive from Anwar. Azmin did not want to take it (the post) because it made him look like a naughty boy," the source said.

Despite denying the claim, Azmin (left) has been identified as ringleader of the movement against the MB. The appointment does nothing to dispel the perception.

The outcome of the retreat has left him out of favour with the Selangor public who are generally supportive of Khalid's relative apolitical approach to the running of the state.

#### Unresolved issues

Azmin will now have a formal platform to influence state policy through an intermediary panel between party and state.

Details of the move are still sketchy, with vice-president R Sivarasa refusing to either confirm or deny anything about the committee, citing "party discipline".

pkr weekly pc 310108 william leongIt is learnt that the five-member panel includes Anwar, PKR treasurer William Leong (right) and the two 'feuding' party-men. It will meet weekly to sort out "management issues" between state and party.

"The panel existed as part of Anwar's role as Selangor economic advisor, and Azmin has been embraced into the committee," said a party member close to the Selangor leadership.

This indicates that Azmin will be party to decisions made about state policy.

Indeed, said a Selangor PKR parliamentarian, Azmin's responsibility is to "move the machinery" and to resolve "outstanding issues" that sometimes fall under state jurisdiction.

"He may consider making changes to the current state committees," he said, alluding to a possible reshuffling of the exco line-up that could encroach on Khalid's authority.

Another issue that needs to be resolved is the possibility of a resource-grab. This includes posts in companies owned by the state government; by convention, such appointments have been the MB's prerogative and are seen as a way to 'assist' party members.

"PKR representatives outside Selangor don't get the same support that we have here, so we should help them by putting them in GLCs," explained the parliamentarian.

He added that Azmin will be tasked with strengthening the party image by engaging more with the media to highlight Selangor's successes, as many feel that Khalid has not sufficiently delivered on this.

This promises to be a major challenge because last weekend's fiasco has opened tussles in PKR to public ridicule.

"(Both Azmin and Khalid) will have to learn to work together. (Party members) are fully backing this reshuffle because we need to close the chapter on this and move on," he said.

But with a laundry list of concerns still unresolved, PKR's compromise deal may only provide temporary relief - not least to the two 'antagonists'.

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