

**Khalid: Azmin still has a lot to learn**  
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Having been diplomatic about his purported rival PKR vice-president Azmin Ali thus far, Selangor MB Khalid Ibrahim yesterday decided not to mince his words in a candid interview with Malaysiakini.

NONEKhalid (right), who in June conceded his post as PKR Selangor chief to Azmin, said as far as leadership is concerned, the veep has a long way to go.

"He has got a lot to learn. His experience is only limited to a certain level. He could be a good learner and opportunities should be given," he said.

Khalid, 63, may claim that he sees no evidence of such, but political pundits following Azmin's fast-track political career believe his movements suggest otherwise.

The 45-year-old's sudden resignation as director of Selangor government-linked company PKNS in June following severe party criticism over Khalid's administration was also read as a sign of protest.

However Azmin's apparent sharp political maneuvering does not seem to impress the former corporate giant.

"I'm saying he has got to learn because being political and being managerial are two different things," he said.

NONEAccording to Khalid, a successful leader must have "the imagination of a statesman" or risk being "nothing more than a street politician".

In fact, he said, it would be better if the MB's post is held by a person who does not have such high political ambitions, as vested interests can impede on good decision-making.

"If I want to (get a certain political post) then I will try to lobby, or the Malay word, ampu here, ampu there then I'll lose (my) sense of judgement," said the former Guthrie CEO.

'Not losing sleep'

As such, the seemingly reluctant politician said that he "does not lose sleep" over whether or not he will run for a high-ranking position in the upcoming party election.

"I don't lobby for it. I don't go around asking people, 'Hey please, consider me'. No, I have reached a certain level in my career such that I am not motivated to achieve this.

"I will run for a division post because it is part and parcel... but I don't have the inclination (for anything else)," he said.

But appearing to have learnt not to step on too many toes, he added that he will consider contesting for the deputy president's post if "the party needs (him)."

"This is politics, so you have to adapt and adopt with the people. You also don't want to create (an image) that you are so arrogant that you don't care about your party," he said.

azmin ali pc in parliament 020709 02And proving that he listens to advice even from the 'inexperienced', he echoed Azmin's (left) scathing comment during the party's Kota Bharu congress in May.

"It's not fair (to not listen to the party). It is them who had fought for you for a long time, so you must give them a certain level of consideration," he said.

Despite Khalid's apparent unwillingness, his name has figured prominently in the list of people rumoured to contest for the number two post.

Having a strong political position will also shore him up to withstand further salvos against his government, a phenomenon which he feels is inevitable.

Selective hearing

All the same, Khalid, who was once named CEO of the year, has found that surviving in politics means adopting selective hearing.

Instead of feeling sore over the incessant internal attacks, he easily brushed it off as the work of "opportunists", whom he is "quite happy to listen to and ignore".

"I accepted that there is a danger that people would get upset over (the things that I do). But after studying (the critics) I realised that they have vested interests and I wish they were not even in the party," he said.

NONE Having joined PKR to contribute to its reform agenda, Khalid feels that like Azmin, the party has a long way to go.

"Fortunately or unfortunately, I did not enter Keadilan from its beginning. But I am part of it (because) I appreciate their contributions and aspirations.

"I am not the one who has the aspiration to be a so-called high-flying (party) leader because (PKR) is still new, only a little over 10 years old. In politics, you are talking 50 or 60 years of tradition before you will get the culture (of statesmanship)," he said.

And it is this culture of statesmanship, and not purely politics, that can ensure PKR's long-term success, he said.

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