

PKR election: Three in battle to be Youth chief
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The PKR Youth wing election is likely to see a three-cornered tussle for the top post among incumbent Shamsul Iskandar Md Akin and supreme council members Badrul Hisam Shaharin and Rafizi Ramli.

It is understood that Nurul Izzah Anwar, the daughter of PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim and party president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, does not intend to contest any senior position in the wing.

Instead, party sources said, Nurul (left) wants to focus on her duties as the MP for Lembah Pantai.

"Even if she does contest, it will probably be at the Lembah Pantai division level only," a source close to Nurul said yesterday.

Although competition between Shamsul and Badrul in the November party election is said to be intense, Rafizi's entry was unexpected, especially since he resigned as supreme council member as well as Youth executive council member in 2004 to focus on his career in the corporate world.

While Shamsul and Badrul were rather coy about announcing their intentions to contest, Rafizi admitted to Malaysiakini: "Yes, I am going to contest for the post of Youth chief." He will make his official announcement next week.

Rafizi, once a student leader in United Kingdom, said he wanted to introduce a "new approach" for the wing, which would not only "depend on the passion and spirit of the youth".

Duo 'blessed' by Anwar

In order to win the next general election, Rafizi said, the Youth wing needed a "new approach" to attract the support of its members who seemed to "less interested in politics".

Added the former senior officer of Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd and Pharmaniaga Bhd: "We have to let go the sentimental (1998) reformation (feelings)."

Now chief executive at the office of the Selangor Economic Adviser, Rafizi is expected to team up with Batu Caves assemblyperson Amiruddin Shari, currently the Youth vice chairperson, who will contest as his deputy.

It is also said that this team has party de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim's "blessings" and is also backed by a group of PKR assembly representatives, among them Nik Nazmi Ahmad (Seri Setia) and Sim Tze Tzin (Pantai Jerejak).

Meanwhile, Shamsul (right) is backed by another Youth vice chairperson, amk pkr youth agm congress 280510 shamsul iskandarKhairul Anuar Ahmad Zainudin, a renowned workers' union activist who was once detained under the controversial Internal Security Act (ISA).

"I did offer to contest for the deputy Youth position to assist Shamsul (as the Youth chief),"

Khairul told Malaysiakini.

Shamsul's current deputy, Mohd Fariz Musa, will not contest as he is now over 40.

Although, PKR's new constitution requires the Youth leader to be 35 years and below, the ruling is only expected to be enforced at the next party election in order to prepare the wing for "transition".

The lone ranger

Unlike Rafizi and Shamsul, Badrul, who is popular for his political gimmicks and oratory skills, is seen as a lone ranger in the battle.

Active in the non-governmental organisation he established - Solidariti Anak Muda Malaysia - Badrul refused to say whether he would go for the Youth chief's post.

"I will not make the announcement. It is up to the grassroots (to decide)," he said.

Describing the party election as a "family affair", Barul said that "in a family, it is not proper to attribute who is better than the others".

Instead, he said, it would be better to "harness the energy" to overthrow the BN leadership.

Asked about the perception that he was entering the contest on his own, Badrul said: "Being alone does not necessarily mean it is going to be quiet, and having support does not mean it will not be quiet."

NONEHowever, it may be more than a three-cornered fight if Hasmi Hashim, another division leader and the one who had challenged Shamsul previously, decides to contest.

Hasmi is said to be "exploring his chances", after having lost out badly to Shamsul in the last election.

PKR is holding its very first direct elections, set to commence tomorrow, before the half-million members of the party vote for their top leaders in November.

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