

Penang PKR leaders coy about support for Azmin
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Penang PKR leaders seem to be too occupied with their own divisional elections to join in the fray for the party's number two post, or throw their support behind Azmin Ali for the job.

They might be treading cautiously over the matter as many Penang members have voiced out their discontent against what they perceive as a "factional war" between two giants - Azmin and his opponent Zaid Ibrahim, who has also stated his intention to vie for the post.

These leaders, unlike their counterparts in Selangor and Negeri Sembilan, said they have not received any invitation to voice support for party veteran Azmin, who is also Gombak Member of Parliament and Bukit Antarabangsa assemblyperson.

Most of them are still bidding their time, observing from afar, while adopting a wait-and-see attitude before revealing their stand.

They distanced themselves from the press conference in Shah Alam yesterday, where a group led by Kota Anggerik assemblyperson Yaakob Sapari, purportedly representing nine others from Selangor and four from Negeri Sembilan, openly endorsed Azmin's candidacy.

This followed a similar press event held by a group of PKR parliamentarians on Monday, claiming to represent 18 MPs and two senators.

Pantai Jerejak state assemblyperson Sim Tze Tzin said he did not receive any invitation to attend the "Support Azmin" event in Selangor, nor was he willing to reveal if a similar event was being planned in Penang.

He denied ever hearing about anyone planning to hold a press conference on the matter, although such events have been hogging the media in the last few days.

Observers said that it could be impossible for Sim not to have gotten wind of the ongoing developments in the party as he was former political aide to party supremo Anwar Ibrahim.

However, he could have been advised to stay out of the fray lest it would be seen as Anwar's tacit approval for Azmin, they added.

He has also aligned himself to the Generasi Reformasi, like Seri Setia assemblyperson and PKR communications director Nik Nazmi Ahmad and Batu Caves assemblyperson Amirudin Shari, who have publicly backed Azmin for the much coveted post.

Asked if he would follow in the same footsteps, Sim said the scenario in Penang was a little different for him than for his comrades in Selangor.

"Azmin is their party whip in Selangor (state legislative assembly)," he added, implying that his peers probably had no choice in the matter.

Sim also said he would rather focus on his own constituency and division contest as he faces a tough fight with M Nyanasegaran, a former MIC leader, who is reportedly having a solid backing from the grassroots.

Meanwhile, Batu Uban assemblyperson S Raveentharan echoed Sim's denial that Penang leaders did not receive any notice to show their support for Azmin.

However, he admitted he backed Azmin in his bid to capture the No. 2 party post although he did not elaborate the reasons behind his decision.

"The Hari Raya celebrations are around the corner, everyone is busy. Pakatan Rakyat's new politics is to take care of everyone, unlike Umno or MCA, who only look out for certain groups," Raveentharan said.

Bukit Tambun assemblyperson and state exco Law Choo Kiang also said he was unaware of any plan to show support for Azmin.

"But I believe that Azmin's supporters are surely planning something," said Law.

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