

**Syed Husin will not defend PKR No 2 post**  
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t's official - PKR deputy president Syed Husin Ali will not be defending his post at the upcoming party elections.

syed husin ali interview 160307 confidentSyed Husin, who was appointed senator last year, has been the deputy president for two terms since the merger of his Parti Rakyat Malaysia and Parti Keadilan to form Parti Keadilan Rakyat in 2003.

The decision by the veteran politician to quit as party's No 2 will pave the way for a much anticipated contest between two rivals - vice-president Azmin Ali and supreme council member Zaid Ibrahim.

Speaking at a press conference in a hotel in Petaling Jaya this morning, Syed Husin said that he made the decision not to contest after consulting party leaders, family and friends.

He will nevertheless continue to remain active in politics.

"I'll be 74 years old next week. I hope I can spend more time on writing and keep company with my wife, children and grandchildren.

"I don't think I'm that old yet, but I want to make way for young blood," he said.

azlanHe was however tight-lipped when asked who he would support in the deputy presidency race between Azmin and Zaid.

"I hope the members will choose a leader who is true to the struggles of PKR and has a strong stand against corruption," he said.

Syed Husin denied he was hard pressed to withdraw from the polls after a group of PKR MPs and state assemblypersons came out openly last week to support Azmin for the no 2 spot.

"No, I'm not under pressure. If I'm under pressure, it's my moral duty to inform the party. A lot of people have been asking me, so it's only fair that I make my announcement before they start nominations on Sept 17."

Asked for his opinion on Zaid's claim that he would face a future similar to deputy prime minister Ghafar Baba, Syed Husin said: "That is his own view. If he thinks he'll face that fate, then it's a pity because it shows he is not confident. Or he is positioning himself as an underdog. But I don't think that's his fate."

According to Syed Husin, he would personally prefer to see party de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim as the PKR president with incumbent Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as the No 2.

However, Anwar has today made it clear that he will not accept nominations for any party post.

Direct elections will strengthen the party

The senator also denied that the upcoming direct elections, set to be the first ever in the

country, will split the party.

"Some have said that the direct elections will ruin the party. But I don't think so.

"It's healthy in democracy to have a little bit of competition. It means that the party is alive," he said.

azlanHe is also not worried about the notion of money politics among the 400,000 members who are eligible to vote.

"I don't think there will be any practice of money politics. PKR is much stronger now. Back then, we had problems finding good candidates for the general elections.

"But now that people know that they have a good chance of winning, they are much bolder," he said.

PKR's 218 divisions will hold two separate meetings - the first to elect divisional leaders beginning this weekend, and a second meeting to vote for 26 supreme council members as well as president, deputy president and four vice-presidents.

The divisions will vote for top national leaders over four weekends from Oct 29 to Nov 21.

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