

**PKR not a family-run party, say leaders**  
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PKR is not a family-run party for its president and deputy president posts to be helmed by a husband and wife pair, said a number of the party's leaders.

NONELast week, several divisions in Selangor advised its members to vote de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim (right) as president.

As for the incumbent Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, they recommended that she take up the deputy president's post.

Arguing that that party's constitution does not recognise a de facto post and not wanting a fresh line-up of leaders for the topmost positions, the divisions said that if the proposal for the couple to take the leading positions is not acceptable, then the status quo should be maintained.

As of now, Wan Azizah is the president and veteran leader Syed Husin Ali is the deputy president. However he has just confirmed he will not be defending his post.

On one hand this move is seen as a tactic to still further discontent and to stop rivalry from brewing within the party.

The official reason given, however, was to prevent defections from taking place by halting challengers.

PKR had held 31 parliamentary seats after the March 3, 2008 general election. However, over the past couple of years, five of the party's parliamentarians and several assemblypersons jumped ship, leaving the party scarred.

However there are party leaders who have not responded favourably to this proposal.

"It would give the impression that there is nepotism in a supposedly democratic party," said a leader.

NONETHis is not the only concern, he said, as Anwar is on trial for allegedly sodomising his former aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan (left), and risks being thrown back into jail for the offence, which carries a maximum 20 years' jail term and whipping.

The issue of who should lead and who should be the back-up must be resolved amicably because many of the party representatives are experienced enough although they might lack support from the grassroots, said another leader, who is also a member of Parliament.

"As this is an internal election, everyone is fighting to get a chance... when we should be preparing for the final line-up of a new generation of leaders who will carry our aspirations to Putrajaya," he said.

He asserted that opposition to the power couple is not a reflection of their leadership, but merely a concern about perception.

"In other political parties this was very apparent in the past and is still practised. These

parties lost big in the last general election for similar reasons," he added.

'Couples might have differences'

Notwithstanding their talents and leadership skills as politicians, another source said that it may not be the best alternative since couples may have their differences.

NONE"Anwar and Wan Azizah (left) are not a good combination as number 1 and number 2. They have important roles to play and it's not encouraged for those holding those positions to be husband and wife," said the source.

"If Anwar goes for the presidency, the deputy should be someone else. Everyone is free to contest and everyone is free to suggest who should contest. I would be insulting the members if I tell them what they should do," said the source, who requested anonymity.

"At the end of the day leaders should be elected be for their vision and commitment to bring the party to greater heights."

Although no one has declared any intention to contest for the top post, the race for the deputy's position started a week ago after newcomer and supreme council member Zaid Ibrahim openly expressed his intention to contest.

Touted as Zaid's challenger is PKR vice-president Azmin Ali, who has yet to confirm his participation. However, he has rallied enough public support, supporting talk that he will definitely contest.

Support for Azmin

Last week, most of the 24 PKR parliamentarians and about 15 assemblypersons from Selangor and Negri Sembilan pledged their support for Azmin to contest the deputy presidency.

The source, however debunked such politicking as an "unhealthy trend".

"Outwardly declaring support for one person gives a signal that you cannot work with anyone else."

In this case, the 30-odd elected representatives in total are not the ones voting for the top line-up, as over 400,000 members are partaking in the process.

"At the end of the day even if the person who wins is not the candidate of our choice, we would still need to work with him," said the source.

Coming back to the top leaders, he said that a deal should be struck instead of prolonging the predicament.

An amicable solution is necessary because the situation is beyond choosing someone as president, it is to determine the next generation of leaders.

