



**Khalid spanner in PKR deputy president race?
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Selangor MB and recently elected PKR Kuala Selangor chief Khalid Ibrahim may be announcing which central leadership post he is vying for only on Oct 10.

But his seeming slip of tongue at a press conference on Tuesday almost confirms that he is joining the heated race for deputy president.



Commenting on the mudslinging, Khalid had (*left*) said: "I just don't want a rift after the polls are over, so I ask that I join (the contest) so there is some balance in the competition."

And his political secretary Faekah Husin had this to say : "He told me regardless of whether he wins or loses, he wants to unite the members. The moment he offered to contest (a "high post"), the tussle became (less intense).

"I believe they have an understanding between them. Khalid after all appointed Zaid (Ibrahim) as the person in charge of Felda affairs in Selangor."

Even though he is not playing to win, Khalid's move could very well take away votes from contender Azmin Ali, who had wrested the party Selangor chief's post from the former earlier this year.

Those who had earlier turned to Azmin, (*right*) merely because they were put off by Zaid's 'strategy' of playing the victim card, would also find relief in Khalid's candidacy.

Better substitute for Zaid's high drama

Clean, focused and reformist-minded, the MB appears to be a better substitute for those who had gravitated towards Zaid for seemingly being steadfast in principle.

In his own defence, the former de-facto law minister has reiterated time and again that his manifesto remained consistent with his reform agenda, but this too has been drowned by his other antics.

Those in Zaid's inner circle are understandably uncomfortable with the idea of Khalid entering the fray.

"More than splitting the votes, Zaid (*right*) may have to step out of the race completely," said a source close to the candidate who requested anonymity.

When he announced his candidacy, Zaid, who has garnered about 40 nominations to date, had said that his participation in the race was on condition that Khalid stayed out of the race.





While those close to Zaid still see this as a real possibility, his statement on Thursday is working against his public image as a man of principles.

Denying a 'flip flop' but admitting to a change of heart, the former de-facto law minister said that the statement was based on the thought that Khalid was not keen on the post, but the "situation has changed".

Even more perplexing is his recent pledge to drop out of the contest if vice president hopeful Nurul Izzah Anwar throws in her hat, surprising even those close to him.

"That's the difficult thing about working with (Zaid). He is very informal, he will listen to everyone, but you never know what is going to come out of this mouth," said the inside source.

Number two post: Nurul still not ready

This is the second time he has referred to Nurul Izzah (*left*) in a manner reserved for one's running mate, although on both occasions the latter appeared to be none-the-wiser.

Interestingly, Nurul who is also the daughter of de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim and party president Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, has yet to officially qualify for to contest having officially received only one nomination.

As such, Zaid's premature statement is read by some as a veiled swipe at Anwar and his family, who have been criticised for nepotism.

Nurul Izzah's claim that she was just as clueless about Zaid's proposal also raises questions about the seriousness of this statement.

"Maybe he said it just to give journalists something to write about," said Faekah, who appeared to not give it much credence.

Nevertheless, Faekah who had been Wan Azizah's long-time aide, said that she believes that Nurul Izzah is a credible candidate as she has proven to be consistent since day one.

The 30-year-old still has a chance as candidacy must be announced by Oct 16 and the headquarters is still waiting for nominations from 30-odd divisions.

No need for experimental leader

According to Zaid backer and Padang Serai MP N Gobalakrishnan, a strong backer of Nurul Izzah for number two, the Lembah Pantai MP has at least two more nominations from Sabah divisions under her belt.

"I think Zaid can win this race because he is the only one who can stand next to Anwar but I support his stepping out to make way for Nurul Izzah."

"Compare Azmin and Nurul Izzah's performance in P... statements and rebuttals, and she has been consist...

Even underdog contender Mustaffa Kamil Ayub (*right*)... Gobalakrishnan.



"(Mustaffa) had introduced training programs and developed strategy (while) Azmin performance as vice president has been weak. He needs another five years before he can run for number two," he said.

This is reminiscent of Khalid's assessment of the Gombak parliamentarian, saying that "Azmin has a lot to learn", albeit referring to the latter's said ambition to be MB.

But whatever it is for the vice president's comfortable position in the nominations race is proof that he is heads and shoulders above his contenders, according to PKR National Youth vice chairman and Batu Caves assemblyperson Amiruddin Shari.

Azmin is also getting boosts from what some see as 'gaffes' on Zaid's part which Amirudin claims as nothing surprising as its consistent with Zaid's character

"He says things that are different only to create controversy. In comparison, Azmin is careful and does not flip flop.

"We need stability in our party, not someone experimental who one day says he will back out for Khalid and then suddenly now is for Nurul Izzah," he said.

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