



Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim heated race for PKR deputy back on contender Zaid

PKR No 2: Zaid unlikely to step aside for Khalid
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The announcement by Selangor yesterday that he will join the president has put the spotlight Ibrahim.

This is because when he first offered himself for the position, Zaid said he would only go for the number two post if Khalid did not vie for it.

If the PKR Federal Territories chief is to safeguard his image as a man of principles, he would have to honour his word and back out of the contest, despite having secured about one-third of the nominations.

Zaid (*right*) has been mum on this and has thus far been unreachable. However, according to a source close to the former de-facto law minister, he is unlikely to give up for the sake of Khalid.

"I believe when he said that (he will not contest if Khalid does), there was some sort of gentlemen's understanding. Things have been less than gentlemanly since then," said the source.

Similarly, Zaid himself had told press, when asked if he would pull out for Khalid, that a "change of situation" may require one to "take a different road".

All down to Nurul Izzah

The source added that the key person to watch now would be Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar, who has yet to decide whether she will take on Zaid's "offer" to back out if she joins the race.

"She is still undecided about this. I am cautious over what Zaid will do (based on Nurul Izzah's decision)," he said.

The PKR Federal Territories vice-chief has only received one nomination for the post of deputy president.

However, it has been reported that she has in fact received more than enough, these coming from the nominations made by some 30-odd divisions that have yet to reach the party headquarters.

The increasingly maverick Pakatan Rakyat coordinator is keeping his lips shut on which position he would go for if Nurul Izzah (*right*) accepts his offer, but it is being speculated that he could be eyeing the top spot.

Whether Zaid is using the "Nurul Izzah offer" as grounds to offer himself for a higher post remains to be seen, but those in this inner circle have raised concern over his increasing unpredictability.



Gunning for the top post, however, may have a severe impact on his political career in PKR, for the overwhelming majority of divisions have nominated incumbent Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

Zaid has garnered more than the required two nominations to qualify to contest for the top spot.

Azmin's camp appears unnerved

Those in fellow deputy president hopeful Azmin Ali's camp appear unnerved by Khalid's announcement, which they "half expected".

Those working on the Gombak MP's campaign said Khalid's candidacy may prove a challenge simply because of the latter's good public image as MB of Selangor.

"He is a leader who can hold his own, but there have been recent clashes within the party, with a lot of elected representatives in Selangor and elsewhere saying that the state has not been helpful to PKR," said one source.

The fact that only two Selangor assemblypersons and a handful of the state division chiefs were present during the MB's announcement of his candidacy also raised doubts over the strength of the support for him.

"It could be hurtful to Khalid's campaign if Zaid pulls out to throw his support behind Khalid," the source said, admitting, however, that the MB did not seem to be in the race to win.

Those close to Azmin (*left*), who is currently overseas, appear to be expecting a three-cornered fight, although it is uncertain which of the four candidates will pull out.

Although contender Mustaffa Kamil Ayub insists he will run the race to the finish, it appears that there are doubts over whether he would go the long haul.

When contacted, he welcomed Khalid's entry into the race and felt he has an edge over Khalid, who he said had a lot on his plate running Selangor, which is Pakatan Rakyat's crown jewel.

"Selangor is crucial state and success in governing this state will help tremendously in our campaign in the next general election. We cannot afford to fail.

"He still has five days to go (before Oct 16, when nominations must be accepted), and even after that, there is still room to withdraw," Mustaffa said.