

Syed Husin: I shall defend my post
Malaysiakini.com
March 16, 2007
Beh Lih Yi

Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) deputy president Dr Syed Husin Ali confirmed that he will defend his post in the coming party polls.

Asked during an interview with malaysiakini yesterday if he would stand in the May elections, the veteran politician replied firmly: "Yes, I am."

Previously, Syed Husin had openly announced his plan to step down.

"I announced that I wanted to retire and in fact took leave (from the party) for about six months from last June to December. I announced in the (last) party congress that I intended to leave," he said.

"But there has been a lot of pressure from within and outside the party for me to stand (for deputy president). They have very good reasons and arguments, it's difficult for me not to consider them," he added.

Political observers are keeping a close watch on the PKR number two post due to the legal constraints over the party's plan to make its current advisor Anwar Ibrahim as the next president.

It is said that if the Registrar of Societies (ROS) rejects the application to allow Anwar to become president before the expiry of his five-year ban from active politics next April, one option would be to name the number two as acting president.

Disputed figures

Other leaders nominated for the deputy president post are current vice-president Azmin Ali, information chief Tian Chua and ex-Youth chief Mohd Ezam Mohd Nor.

However, the real contest is seen to be between Syed Husin and Azmin.

According to figures released by the PKR information bureau earlier this week, Syed Husin is currently leading with 16 nominations while Azmin has received 14.

The figures are based on the 33 out of the 167 divisions which have completed their annual meetings as of last weekend.

The figures however have been disputed by certain quarters who claim the results excluded nominations from divisions in Sabah and Sarawak. They claimed that Azmin had received an additional four nominations.

On the same note, there are rumours that Azmin - who is a protege of Anwar - will pull out from the race and is expected to make an announcement soon.

Despite numerous attempts, he could not be reached for comment since yesterday.

Malaysiakini will publish the full interview with Syed Husin on Monday. Among others, the 70-year-old politician talks about his relationship with Azmin, his readiness to lead the party as acting president should the need arise and his view on several national issues.

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