

Azmin pulls out of party polls
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Beh Lih Yi and Muda Mohd Noor

Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) vice-president Azmin Ali has decided not to contest for any posts during the party polls in May.

He will also pull out from the nomination race for the deputy president post currently held by veteran politician Dr Syed Husin Ali.

In an exclusive interview with malaysiakini at his office in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, Azmin said his withdrawal was due to Syed Husin's decision to defend the post.

"It's a tough decision that I have to make but after going through consultations and meetings (with supporters and divisional leaders), I have decided not to contest," he said during the 90-minute interview.

Azmin also consulted party advisor Anwar Ibrahim and president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail before making up his mind.

The 42-year-old politician said he believes in a 'consensus approach' to preserve harmony in the party.

With his withdrawal, Azmin urged the divisions which nominated him to support Syed Husin instead.

Succession plan

Azmin, who was elected vice-president in 2004, was initially rumoured to be eyeing the deputy president post although he has been reluctant to confirm this.

He said the opposition party was preparing a succession plan since Syed Husin told the last party congress in Penang last September that he wanted to retire from politics.

"But the political scenario changed when Syed Husin expressed in February this year (during a party internal retreat) his desire to defend the post. This led me to reflect the entire situation," he added.

On the same note, Azmin said he bore no grudge against Syed Husin.

**PKR polls nominations
As of March 11, 2007**

President	Nominations
Anwar Ibrahim	26
Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail*	5
Rahman Othman	2
Deputy president	
Dr Syed Husin Ali*	16
Azmin Ali	14
Ezam Mohd Nor	2
Tian Chua	1
Vice president (3 posts)	
Dr Lee Boon Chye*	29
Mustapa Kamil Ayub*	12
Nallakarupan KS	12
Sivarasa Rasiah*	11
Azmin Ali*	9
Fuziah Salleh	8
Ezam Mohd Nor	6
Dr Jeffrey Kitingan	3
Dr Xavier Jayakumar	2
Tian Chua	2
Dr Rahim Ghouse	1
Zahrain Hashim	1
Dr Mansor Osman	1
Dr Badrul Amin Bahron	1

* Incumbents
Source: PKR information bureau

Azlan Zamhari /
Malaysiakini

As for his next move, Azmin said he will concentrate on the newly formed party 'general election steering committee' which will be headed by Anwar.

Leading the nomination race

Meanwhile, he also expressed gratitude for the nominations he received and said that he was under 'tremendous pressure' to accept the nominations for deputy presidency.

"They (the supporters) argued that a contest will be healthy and positive for the party," he said

PKR secretary-general Kamarul Bahrin Abas said today that Azmin is leading the nomination race with 26, followed by Syed Husin 25 as of March 18.

Two others who have been nominated for the deputy president post are former Youth chief Ezam Mohd Nor and information bureau chief Tian Chua.

With Azmin out of the race, Syed Husin is expected to retain the post.

The full interview with Azmin will be published on Monday. Among others, he will explain further on his decision to withdraw and address the numerous accusations against him, including money politics.

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