

**Ijok: PKR to field Khalid**  
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**Beh Lih Yi**

Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) treasurer Khalid Ibrahim has been named as the party's candidate for the April 28 Ijok by-election in Selangor.

Although no official announcement has been made, the party's information bureau had emailed his profile to the media this afternoon under the title: 'PKR Ijok by-election candidate: Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim's profile'.

Party advisor Anwar Ibrahim is scheduled to make the official announcement at a function in Ijok tonight together with other party heavyweights, including president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

There has been much controversy over the PKR candidate as certain quarters have called on the opposition party to field an Indian candidate to prove its multi-racialism.

PKR's Indian members lobbying for an Indian candidate had also boycotted a meeting on Saturday night to discuss by-election strategies after learning that Khalid will be selected.

Speculations intensified over the weekend when the party shortlisted Khalid and businessman S Nallakarupan.

Khalid, who was born in Kuala Selangor, was the former chief executive officer of government-linked Permodalan Nasional Bhd and later plantation giant Guthrie Group Bhd until 2003.

The 61-year-old corporate figure - who is a close associate of Anwar - joined PKR last year. He is also the party's Selangor chief as well as the Kuala Selangor division chief.

### **SMS campaign**

According to the PKR email, Khalid's work in the corporate sector had benefitted the locals and the "people of Kuala Selangor have long appreciated this."

This included the building of a training centre in Kuala Selangor for operating industrial machinery and the introduction of a programme to train school dropouts.

"Both programmes succeeded in raising the quality of life and giving educational opportunities to the people, especially youths in Ijok and Kuala Selangor," it stated.

The statement noted that if elected, Khalid will introduce economic and social programmes, focusing on skill training and youth development.

However, a widely circulated SMS has criticised Khalid in relation to his tenure at Guthrie.

It accused him of ill treating squatters, the majority of whom were Indians, by ordering the demolition of their houses and Hindu temples.

Contacted earlier, Khalid said he was not aware of the SMS but described such things as "normal" in politics.

"I have never done anything illegal (when I was in Guthrie). We don't need to answer all these (allegations)," he added.

Khalid will take on Barisan Nasional's MIC candidate K Parthiban. The Ijok seat fell vacant following the death of its MIC incumbent K Sivalingam on April 4.

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