

Nalla: I'm happy for him
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Beh Lih Yi

Businessman S Nallakaruppan said he is happy for Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) treasurer Khalid Ibrahim for being chosen as the candidate for the upcoming Ijok by-election in Selangor.

Nallakaruppan, who joined the opposition party last year, was speculated as a possible candidate as well.

"He (Khalid) is the candidate, I am not disappointed. I am very happy for him. He is a local boy and has a good standing there," he said when contacted.

Nallakaruppan also denied any knowledge about a widely-circulated SMS which accused Khalid of ill-treating Indian squatters when he headed plantation giant Guthrie.

The businessman, who like Khalid (right) is a close friend of PKR advisor Anwar Ibrahim, is expected to vie for vice-presidency in next month's party polls.

PKR's choice of candidate has been subject to much controversy as certain quarters have called on the party to field an Indian candidate in the April 12 contest.

Some of the party's Indian members had expressed disappointment with the pattern of fielding only Malay candidates in by-elections and talks of a boycott had also circulated.

Support Khalid

Meanwhile, Nallakaruppan is scheduled to hold a meeting with his supporters today.

According to the businessman, he will be calling on his supporters to support Khalid in the by-election.

Asked if he will attend a function in Ijok tonight where Anwar is scheduled to make an official announcement on Khalid's candidacy, he replied: "I think I will go... I will be there... I have to go."

In an email to the media this afternoon, PKR's information bureau somewhat confirmed the speculation that Khalid is the chosen one.

The 61-year-old corporate figure will be taking on Barisan Nasional's MIC candidate K Parthiban.

The Ijok state seat fell vacant following the death of its MIC incumbent K Sivalingam on April 4.

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