

Drama or no drama, PKR polls to continue today
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There isn't a dull moment in sight in the lengthy PKR direct polls as it enters its third week today despite hues and cries of irregularities.

But significantly, the hotly-contested deputy president post will no longer be a three-corner fight with Zaid Ibrahim, who was running second up to last week, pulling out days before the polls hit Selangor.

The state, which is PKR's sole power source, has the most members at more than 100,000, and how Selangor votes will more or less determine the winner in the race.

Nine Selangor divisions will head to the polls on Saturday and Sunday, along with 60 other divisions in Penang, Johor, Terengganu, Sabah, Perak, Sarawak, Malacca and Putrajaya.

Kicking off this weekend's polls, however, are eight divisions in Kedah and four in Kelantan, which will vote today.

zaid ibrahim pc 091110 zaid in front of mediaThe embattled Zaid made public his decision to drop out unexpectedly on his blog, citing "malpractices and electoral fraud" in the election as a reason for his decision.

He also resigned from all party posts, including Federal Territories chief and political bureau member, as a show of protest.

Those campaigning for him have long alleged abuse in the polls, pointing their fingers at contender and current forerunner Azmin Ali, who has denied any wrongdoing.

Alleged irregularities in Sabah divisions

Last weekend, claims of vote-buying and fraud were made involving Sabah divisions including Sandakan, Tawau, Libaran and to a certain extent, Tenom.

All of these divisions saw massive turnouts, as opposed to trends of about 10 percent in other Sabah divisions, with results showing remarkable support for Azmin.

Zaid's decision to pull out of the race puts Azmin heads and shoulders ahead the other contender for the post, Mustaffa Kamil Ayub.

azlanMustaffa too has shown unhappiness with the way the polls have been conducted, accusing the party's election committee of disregarding election regulations.

His dissatisfaction was expressed in the memorandum he sent to the election committee on Monday, calling for a halt of the polls until all complaints are addressed.

The same call has been made by Youth chief hopeful Badrul Amin Shahrin early in the nomination stage, and reiterated through a PKR Youth resolution which he initiated yesterday.

Che'gubard, as he is fondly known, is currently hot on the tails of incumbent Shamsul

Iskandar Mohd Akin, who is leading with merely 31 votes.

Badrul's running mate Chang Lih Kang is behind Shamsul's partner Anuar Ahmad Zainuddin by 384 votes.

Mustaffa's about-turn

But while Badrul's message has remained relatively consistent, Mustaffa's statement yesterday raised eyebrows.

The PKR vice-president's statement in support of de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim is seen as a means to distance himself from Zaid.

acceptance of nomination pkr headquarters azmin ali 2This may also indicate that he will not step out of the race, despite claiming that he may do so if conditions with the polls do not improve.

This could be bad news for those wary of Azmin (left) taking the deputy post, but whether or not he stays in the race, Mustaffa's tally of votes still remains much too low to mount a real challenge against Azmin.

Anxiety over whether the heated contest would split the party also climbed another notch with Zaid claiming that he will form a new party - Keadilan Baru - if sacked.

Saying this in Sungai Petani while on a 'roadshow' to explain his actions to supporters and explain his decision, Zaid's statement could almost be read as a recruitment call.

nurul izzah interview 090910Meanwhile, another race to watch would be the four vice-president's posts, where Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar (4,854 votes) currently leading the pact.

Trailing her is party strategic director Tian Chua (3,933), Penang Deputy Chief Minister I Mansor Othman (3,552) and Kuantan MP Fuziah Salleh (3,370).

The polls to decide PKR top leaders in the party's first-ever direct elections is being conducted over four weekends until Nov 21.

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