

Shadow cabinet: Possible PKR ministers
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analysis
MCPX

We discussed a possible DAP cabinet line-up in yesterday's article. We now set our sights on PKR, a former mosquito party with only one member of parliament, which has transformed itself into the linchpin of Pakatan Rakyat with a whopping 31 MPs.

Conventional wisdom is that PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim would contest in a by-election before initiating any moves to dislodge Barisan Nasional as the government. He would then become the PM of the new government.

pk r keadilan ijok post election 020507 anwar and tian chuaBut there is another possibility. Wan Azizah (Permatang Pauh) could be made prime minister, Anwar could be appointed a senator and be made a minister in the prime minister's department. He would then become the de facto PM. This situation might arise if Anwar does not want to bother with contesting in a by-election but it's highly unlikely. He needs to have the legitimacy of winning a by-election.

Beyond Anwar and Wan Azizah as obvious cabinet members, the picture gets a little bit hazy. Unlike DAP, which faces the problem of having too many incumbents, PKR faces the problem of having too few.

black 14 questioning 160408 azmin aliAll but one of its 31 MPs are new. Hence, the issue of having an incumbency claim to a cabinet position does not arise. Instead of using incumbency, PKR will likely use party seniority as the basis for allocating cabinet positions.

Khalid Ibrahim (Bandar Tun Razak), PKR's former secretary-general and also the menteri besar of Selangor, would obviously not be able to hold a cabinet position. But Azmin Ali (Gombak), a long-time confidante of Anwar and a PKR vice-president, is likely to get a senior cabinet position such as defense or education.

Saifuddin Nasution (Machang), although not one of the highest ranking leaders in PKR (his official post is director of strategy), is one of the few PKR MPs who has legislative experience. He famously won the Lunas by-election in 2000. He is also an obvious candidate for a senior cabinet position such as home affairs.

pk r congress seremban 260507 anwar talk to christian groupsThe two other senior PKR leaders who are also MPs are Lee Boon Chye (Gopeng) and R Sivarasa (Subang). Both are vice-presidents and prime candidates for cabinet positions.

The other PKR MPs who have leadership positions include Fuziah Salleh (Kuantan), the deputy director in charge of elections; William Leong (Serdang) the treasurer of PKR; Tian Chua (Batu), the information chief; N Gobalakrishnan (Padang Serai), Johari Abdul (Sungai Petani) and S Manikavasagam (Kapar) – all members of PKR's executive committee.

Looking at the names above, PKR faces an obvious challenge, which is that many of its more well-known and senior MPs also happen to be non Malays. While PKR is a multi-racial party in its composition and its philosophy, the political reality remains that PKR cannot be

seen as a party where non-Malays are more dominant.

This would be the perception even if PKR has an equal number of Malay and non-Malay cabinet members. The political reality is that if PKR has an allocation of 10 cabinet positions, it is likely that at most three will be given to non-Malay MPs within its ranks. It could be as few as two. This is realpolitik, folks.

Syed Husin in the cabinet?

Yusmadi Yusoff To fill up the other cabinet positions, PKR will have to elevate some of its Malay MPs who are not very well-known nationally. A young and capable MP such as Yusmadi Yusoff (Balik Pulau), who is a practicing lawyer and a Hubert Humphrey Fellow, might see himself unexpectedly catapulted to a cabinet level post.

Syed Husin Ali interview 160307 confident PKR also has the option of bringing in other senior Malay leaders (who are not MPs) into the cabinet via the senatorship route, a common practice within the BN.

Syed Husin Ali (right), the vice-president of PKR, would be an ideal candidate for this, and he would be an invaluable addition to a Pakatan cabinet. He would make an excellent minister for higher education, for example. Mustaffa Kamil Ayub, another PKR vice-president, could also be made a cabinet minister via this route as could as could Jeffrey Kitingan, another PKR vice-president, to give East Malaysia some representation.

Lembah Pantai nomination day 240208 Nurul Izzah Perhaps the most interesting quandary for PKR is to decide on the role for Nurul Izzah (Lembah Pantai). She has shown herself to be bright and capable, successfully defeating one of the big guns of Wanita Umno, Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

But it would be extremely difficult for PKR to justify her appointment to a cabinet level position (or even a deputy minister for that matter) given the prominent roles both her father and mother have within the party. For this reason, it is likely that she will remain as a backbencher if Pakatan manages to form the next government.

To summarise, we expect to see Anwar and Wan Azizah both holding senior-level cabinet positions in a Pakatan-led government, followed by Azmin Ali, Saifuddin Nasution, Lee Boon Chye and R Sivarasa with perhaps Syed Husin Ali and one or two others being appointed cabinet members via the senatorship route.

Fuziah Salleh and Johari Abdul are also possible candidates with Tian Chua and N Gobalakrishnan possibly jostling for the remaining position. Yusmadi Yusoff is a dark horse.