

Zaid seen losing steam in PKR No. 2 contest <http://www.google.com/buzz/post>
Malaysianmirror.com
22 September 2010

FT PKR chief Zaid Ibrahim is trailing in the race for the party deputy presidency, with main rivals Azmin Ali and Mustafa Kamil Ayub picking up nominations at a much quicker pace, presaging the end of the road for the former Umno leader who had hoped to catapult to power in PKR's first-ever direct election.

By the end of this week, more than 70 percent of PKR's 205 divisions would have held their Annual General Meetings and nominated whomever it was they wanted to be their No. 2 leader.

"The picture will become clearer after this weekend. Except for Sarawak, Zaid has been trailing. His supporters may say nominations are not important as members could vote differently when they cast their ballots later on. But that is on the premise that the grassroots had been pressured to nominate leaders whom they didn't really want. PKR may not be perfect but it is not so bad as it has been painted out to be. If it is, then why is Zaid fighting so hard to stay," a party watcher told *Malaysia Chronicle*.

The final batch of nominations will come from divisions in Selangor, Johor, Sarawak and the Federal Territories. The closing date is on Oct 3. Voting takes place from Oct 29 to Nov 21. The results will be announced on Nov 27.

Four-cornered fight?

Zaid faces several possible candidates but his main target is long-time vice president Azmin Ali. Their rivalry has cast a gloom over the party polls, an event that had been eagerly anticipated by members as Pemilihan 2010 is the first time each member gets to choose whom they want as their national leaders.

Apart from Azmin, another vice president Mustafa Kamil Ayub is gaining ground on Zaid. Strategic director Tian Chua is also in the game while Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim will announce his decision on October 3.

"We are looking at a four-cornered fight. Five contenders is not impossible. And this is the healthy competition that the PKR top leadership had hoped to see. What they did not expect was Zaid's aggressive behavior. They were shocked at the way he came after PKR and now it looks like he may be going after Pakatan as well," a party veteran told *Malaysia Chronicle*.

He was referring to a report in the *Malaysian Insider*, where Zaid had accused his coalition of being immature in not supporting some of Prime Minister Najib Razak's bills last year.

"PR parliamentarians had not taken the opportunity at the time to support the BN and the new PM to resolve these issues," he lamented. "And this is where PR and BN must show some political maturity."

Less savvy

Many PKR members have condemned Zaid for what they perceive to be 'unacceptable' conduct. Some even insist that he be sacked for indiscipline. Their grouses are based on the fact the former Umno leader has been campaigning through the media, accusing PKR of

being an Umno carbon-copy and even attacking de-facto head Anwar Ibrahim. His latest misdeed was in calling outgoing deputy president Syed Husin Ali 'nyanyuk' or senile.

Needless to say, this bizarre conduct has benefited Azmin as well as the other potential candidates. Azmin has been quick to demand that Zaid apologize to the well-respected Syed Husin and retract his comments.

"Obviously Azmin has his own faults, he is by no means perfect. There are many PKR members who would prefer someone else, but it is not Zaid. Initially, we all thought Zaid would be the first to welcome challengers and then if he loses, close ranks and have a coffee with everyone," said the PKR veteran.

But look at the way he has been lashing out. Apart from disrespect and indiscipline, it is not acceptable because PKR is a political party and to be a leader, you must demonstrate political savvy. The tactics Zaid used look very amateur compared to Azmin, who scored points by waiting for Syed Husin to announce his retirement. Of course this doesn't mean all PKR members are now crazy about Azmin. He still has his faults but they won't be choosing Zaid. Those who support Azmin will vote for him. Those who don't want him may petition Anwar or give their vote to the other candidates."

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