

**PKR polls: Is it all about nepotism and dynastic politics?**  
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KUALA LUMPUR – For the first time, the Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) elections, scheduled in November, is attracting a lot of attention including from within and outside, with issues ranging from nepotism, personal attacks to dynastic politics.

And Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar's decision to contest the vice-president's post in the upcoming elections have given rise to differing views about nepotism and democracy in the party.

Some political analysts pointed to the fact that Anwar Ibrahim was the de facto leader of the PKR, Anwar's wife Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, the president, and now the daughter was vying for one of the vice president's posts.

Well-known political analyst and former deputy president of the party, Dr Chandra Muzaffar, said that it only showed what the party preached was different from what it practised.

"I think this is a sort of political nepotism. . .it shows that basically Anwar wants to exercise total control over the party. . .he wants to make sure the party is there for him," he told *Bernama* in an interview.

Chandra, Professor of Global Studies at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), also said that PKR was just a vehicle to fulfill Anwar's ambition of becoming the country's prime minister.

"PKR has nothing to do with the slogans it claims to champion such as democracy, equality and social justice," he said.

Dr Sivamurugan Pandian, a political analyst at USM, said that maybe Nurul Izzah should have contested other posts such as a seat in the supreme council.

"She might have all the credentials. But certainly by contesting the vice president post, it creates this kind of arguments (about nepotism and dynastic politics).. .because the combination of three family members, if Nurul wins the election, will put the party I think under the absolute control of Anwar," he said.

He said that with Nurul Izzah's entry into a top level post, the party and Anwar cannot escape from criticism, both within and outside.

"This will also affect the legitimacy of PKR as a political party," he said, adding that there were already a lot of accusations about factionalism politics in the party in view of the run-up to the election.

So far, 20 people have either expressed their intention or received nominations to contest the four elected vice-presidency slots, including Johor party chief Chua Jui Meng, Padang Serai MP N. Gobalakrishnan, Kapar MP S. Manikavasagam and Youth chief Shamsul Iskandar.

Nurul Izzah, who had initially said that she was not vying for any post, changed her mind yesterday after receiving eight nominations, saying that she wanted to respect the party members' wishes.

Meanwhile, PKR strategic director Tian Chua said that PKR was very much a democratic party and dismissed the talks of nepotism and dynastic politics in the party.

Tian Chua said that Nurul Izzah had all the right to contest in her own capacity, adding that eventually she had to prove herself in order to get support and being elected.

"I don't think anyone can control or influence the decision (of members)... we have put in place an election system which itself reduces nepotism and favouritism," he said.

PKR divisions have been meeting since last week and its 218 divisions are scheduled to complete their nominations by Oct 3. The party has fixed Oct 10 as the deadline for the nominations to be made by each division.

Direct elections for the top PKR leadership positions will take place from Oct 31 to Nov 21 while the party's national congress will be held from Nov 26 to 28. - *Bernama*

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