

Khalid's counterattack
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COMMENT Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim has made an announcement of contesting for the PKR deputy president position. However, he has also set up a special committee to study the impact of his decision to contest for the position.

Since he has made the decision of contesting and the announcement of election manifesto, why does he still need the special committee formed by four leaders to study the decision? Even worse, one of the committee members is Batu MP Tian Chua, who has qualified to contest. It shows that Khalid is not confident enough and needs to sound out and draw the support of other factions. Once the situation changes, he might shift to contest for a vice-president post.

It has inevitably raised the speculation that Khalid's sudden announcement to contest for the deputy president post is an intention to keep his Menteri Besar post.

His performance as the Selangor Menteri Besar has been fair so far with neither big mistake, nor surprise.

Khalid's strongest quality is determination. He never gets lost because of external interference. For example, despite the continuous pressure from the central government, Khalid has always insisted to first finish the water restructuring negotiation.

Although Selangor is the heart of national economy contributing 25 to 30% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the PKR state government has failed to surpass the economic performance of the previous state government.

At the same time, some PKR members are dissatisfied with Khalid, particularly when party supporters are unable to share resources and programmes of the state. Therefore, there are rumours about overthrowing and replacing him with party vice president Azmin Ali.

Former PKR supreme council member Ng Lum Yong recently revealed a telephone conversation recording that allegedly exposed a "political conspiracy" to topple Khalid by his rival Azmin.

After Anwar Ibrahim became the Selangor economic adviser, Azmin has taken over the Selangor PKR chairman post from Khalid. To outsiders, Khalid seems to have been sidelined and he holds only the title but no actual power.

Under such circumstances, Khalid does not have many options but to contest for the deputy president post as even if he contests for a vice-president post, his party position seems to be lower than Azmin, who is expected to be elected the deputy president. If that happens, Khalid might lose his Menteri Besar post in the next general election. Therefore, it seems to be a showdown for him to make the announcement of contesting for the deputy president post.

However, Azmin will benefit from Khalid's participation in the battle. Azmin, with solid grassroots forces, will benefit from distributed votes when more people are contesting for the post (so far, seven people have qualified themselves to contest). Besides, the possibility for Khalid to win is not high as he has been busy with Selangor state affairs and his

influences are limited to within the Selangor border.

Meanwhile, Wangsa Maju chief Zaid Ibrahim has kept changing his mind. He was the first who made an announcement of contesting for the deputy president post but later, he said he is willing to pull out of the race if Nurul Izzah Anwar decides to contest for the post.

Zaid's criticism against the PKR during an interview with the Utusan Malaysia has caused counter-effects, including angering Anwar. Constant inappropriate remarks have caused him lose many of votes and it seems that he has been caught in a hopeless situation.

Neither Khalid nor Zaid is suitable for the party ecology of the PKR. They should know how to engage in politics in addition to performances and images.

Khalid's counterattack is pointless unless he is able to gain support from more non-mainstream factions. Otherwise, it is difficult for him to break Azmin's team. This is what we called politics and there is no exception even for the PKR which has always shouted for reforms. — *mysinchew.com*

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