

Dispute over

Anwar's eligibility

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Challenger lodges protest with committee

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PETALING JAYA: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's bid to become the next president of Parti Keadilan Rakyat is being disputed just days before the party's national congress and election in Seremban this weekend.

His rival for the top post, Abdul Rahman Othman, has lodged a protest with the party's election committee, pointing out that Anwar's nomination was not valid under the party constitution.

Rahman said the PKR constitution clearly stated that anyone who had been barred by the law from holding posts in any society could not be elected or even nominated to party posts.

"Our party constitution is even stricter than the Societies Act when it comes to this matter.

"The Societies Act only bars convicted persons from holding any posts whereas our constitution does not even allow nominations for such persons," he said.

Anwar is disqualified from active politics until April next year as a result of his corruption conviction.

Abdul Rahman, Anwar and his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who is the incumbent, are vying for the PKR presidency.

Rahman is a former treasurer and deputy president of the party.

Anwar, who received 120 nominations, is a shoo-in for the post barring any disqualification. Dr Wan Azizah received 10 nominations

and Rahman seven.

Election committee secretary Ahmad Shabrimi informed Rahman late yesterday that Anwar's lawyers had advised him that Anwar could contest the post because he had requested an exemption from the Registrar of Societies (ROS).

But it could not be confirmed whether the ROS had approved his request.

Ahmad Shabrimi said the party's supreme council had also decided Anwar should contest.

Anwar has indirectly replied to the objections in his blog, saying there were strong legal grounds for him to contest and described those challenging his nomination as "desperados of Umno and the Barisan Nasional".

Incumbent deputy president Dr Syed Husin Ali has been returned unopposed after Azmin Ali withdrew from the contest.

There are six nominees for the three vice-presidencies. They are Azmin, Dr Lee Boon Chye, Fuziah Salleh, Dr Jeffrey Kitingan, Mustapha Kamil Ayob and Dr Xavier Jayakumar.

A total of 63 nominations were received for 20 supreme council posts.

All key posts for the Wanita and Youth wings are being contested except for the Wanita leadership which Zuraidah Kamaruddin has won unopposed.

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Anwar sets stage for political role