

# PKR succession talk heats up

THE pledges of support for Nurul Izzah Anwar have poured in fast and furious over the last 24 hours.

The latest open backing came from the powerful Selangor PKR led by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari and other state leaders.

The statement was signed by 19 of the state's 22 divisions. Three are said to have abstained.

The Prime Minister's senior political secretary, Datuk Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin who heads the Hang Tuah Jaya division in Melaka, also backed Nurul Izzah for the post.

The PKR women's wing headed by its secretary Loh Ker Chean and others have also endorsed Nurul Izzah.

It has snowballed to such an extent that the allegiance came in from party leaders across the nation as nomination begins tomorrow and ends on Friday.

With less than 48 hours to go, party leaders have come out to push for the former three-term Member of Parliament to go for the deputy president's post.

The incumbent is Datuk Seri Mohd Rafizi Ramli, the Economy Minister, who is back from leave of his ministerial post following the defeat of several key allies including Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad at

**Support for Nurul Izzah Anwar to contest PKR's deputy president post is surging nationwide, with key leaders and divisions endorsing her. As party president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's final term looms, party voices are pushing for clear succession planning.**



## Comment

the division-level party elections.

Party president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has downplayed Rafizi's leave but party leaders have privately said that the Pandan MP has been unhappy. His critics said he is sulking, adding that he was not a team player.

Party leaders privately said Rafizi's decision to take leave at this time has put PKR and the government in an awkward position.

More so when the Federal Government is taking steps to protect the country's economy at a time of geo-economic uncertainties in the wake of the 24% tariff

imposed on Malaysia by the Trump administration.

Nurul Izzah has yet to commit herself to make a bid for the party's No.2 post so far, except to campaign for one of the four vice-president posts.

"We will have to convince her. Nurul Izzah has always been a team player.

"Sometimes, she is taken for granted. Her campaigns for a veep post have been transparent," said a state leader.

But the urgency has stepped up over the last 24 hours following Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail's delay in committing himself to take on Rafizi.

Party campaigners, who criss-crossed the country said that at every stop, they were asked whether the 61-year-old Home Minister will take on Rafizi but they could not give a straight reply.

In the 2022 party polls, Saifuddin Nasution lost by a huge margin to Rafizi, which could be a reason why the former wanted to

make further calculations.

But this year's PKR elections are crucial due to the party's unsettled leadership succession.

Anwar is expected to retain the party president's post without contest at the party congress on May 24 but it will be the final term for the 77-year-old politician.

He has said earlier that the Number Two in the party should be "allowed to continue" but voices from the grassroots have been increasingly hollering for Nurul Izzah.

The 44-year-old has proven her mettle in the party, having gone through the darkest period when Anwar was jailed. She served for three terms as MP and has continued to be an advocate for human rights.

The big question of "who after Anwar" needs to be settled this time because the PM turns 80 in three years and as with any organisation, succession planning must always be on track.

Political analysts expect detractors

of Nurul Izzah to say that she has been engineered to succeed her father.

"But let's not forget that Nurul Izzah does not hold any government post.

"It means she can devote her time to strengthen the party, which now has 31 MPs, ahead of the general election.

"She is also widely accepted by the other component parties in Pakatan Harapan, namely the DAP and Amanah, but this is the window for her to decide.

"If she declines, the window will be shut and three years is a long time," said an analyst.

The other leaders in the running for the four veep posts include Sungai Buloh MP Datuk R. Ramanan, Amirudin and Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Aminuddin Harun.

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