

PKR names three new faces for Selangor contest
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 15 — PKR will field three new faces in its Selangor state lineup and two new candidates for the Kapar and Kelana Jaya federal seats as it fights to keep the state under Pakatan Rakyat (PR) control in the May 5 polls.

The PR anchor party also made official the known candidacy of party strategy director and whistleblower Rafizi Ramli for the Pandan race and maverick academic Professor Dr Abdul Aziz Bari in Sabak Bernam. Both are federal seats.

“The announcement made tonight was done with detailed considerations.

“Those chosen have qualifications and are professionals and committed to shoulder the responsibility to serve the rakyat,” PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told about 5,000 supporters at the official unveiling of the party’s Selangor lineup in Keramat here last night.

In total, PKR will be contesting 11 of the 22 parliamentary seats and the lion’s share or 21 of the 56 state seats although the party could add one more —Kota Damansara — to its tally depending on the outcome of the negotiations with Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM).

PSM won the seat in Election 2008 but contested under a PKR ticket then as it was not recognised by the Registrar of Societies. It was officially registered as a legal outfit in 2010.

PSM’s legitimate standing and its insistence on contesting under its own banner could see the opposition facing a three-cornered fight in Semenyih after PKR said last night it would field its candidate there. PSM had lost the seat in 2008.

“For Kota Damansara we will await their response to our offer to contest under a PKR ticket,” said Anwar.

Meanwhile, PKR dropped incumbents S. Manickavasagam and Loh Gwo Burne from the Kapar and Kelana Jaya seats respectively.

Loh, who rose to prominence for his role in exposing the infamous “Lingam tape”, a video allegedly showing a lawyer brokering the appointment of judges, will be replaced by the party’s investment bureau chief, Wong Chen.

Anwar revealed that Manickavasagam will instead contest the Bukit Melawati state seat while G. Manivanan, a young lawyer, will take over Kapar, a seat with a high percentage of Indian voters.

Manivanan is among the three new faces. The other two are party Federal Territories chief Dr Idris Ahmad and teacher Lee Chi Chen, who will be contesting the Ijok and Kajang seats respectively.

Ijok was formerly held by caretaker Selangor Mentri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim, who was made PKR’s candidate for the Pelabuhan Klang state seat contest, a move that sparked speculation that he was facing defeat in Ijok and was likely to be dropped as mentri besar if PR retains Selangor.

But the party's Selangor chief Azmin Ali said he would fully support Abdul Khalid's leadership and help him defend to keep the country's richest state in PR's hands.

"I will become the general to fight and defend Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim. We will defend him and Selangor," Azmin said at last night's event.

The remark may suggest that PKR is still considering keeping Abdul Khalid as its menteri besar candidate. It would also send a signal that Selangor PKR is united in facing an enemy that is hell-bent on recapturing the state.

The battle for Selangor, the country's largest income contributor, is set to be a heated contest after Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman Datuk Seri Najib Razak had made his intention clear that losing the state for a second term is not an option.

Selangor was one of the four states that fell into the opposition's hands in Election 2008 where the ruling coalition also lost its parliamentary supermajority.

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