

## **PKR polls: A crowded race for deputy presidency**

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PETALING JAYA: PKR's Batu MP Tian Chua today confirmed that he will contest for the deputy president post by filing in his nomination at the PKR party poll.

The incumbent PKR vice president had earlier stated that he was mulling over the idea and rumours had been abound.

Many thought the party number two post would be a straight fight between Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim and the incumbent deputy Azmin Ali.

"I want to defend the tradition of a Malaysian reformist party, especially when it is faced with a second wave of oppression," Chua said.

"People want to see a strong voice that will be determined to resist the crackdown," he added.

Both Chua and Khalid's nominations were accepted by the party's returning officer at noon today.

Later at 3pm, PKR elections chief Johari Abdul announced that party secretary general Saifuddin Nasution had also joined the race for deputy presidency.

When nominations closed at 5pm later, the number two post saw a six-way fight between Khalid, Azmin, Saifuddin, Tian Chua, Batang Kali PKR leader K Ramachandram, and Puchong division leader S Murali.

Khalid said he hoped that all contestants would not resort to mudslinging and dirty tactics.

"We should be ethical and practice what we preach. Any statement made to slander the party colleagues should be avoided," he said.

Azmin said he only submitted his nomination paper at the eleventh hour because he held a long consultation session with Anwar.

Asked whether he was mulling contesting for PKR presidency, he said: "That is a history. I have decided, I put in my paper".

The Gombak MP said being the incumbent deputy president does not mean he has an edge in the battle because his opponent included a Menteri Besar

"I am without any position, not even the executive councillor. But I believed in the wisdom of party members," he said.

Meanwhile, PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim is vying for the party president post, amid

concerns that he could be imprisoned on sodomy charges as he is appealing against the five years sentences.

Anwar's nomination was submitted on his behalf by incumbent PKR deputy treasurer-general Low Chee Cheong.

He is running against his wife and incumbent PKR president Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who surprised many by joining the contest.

### **16-way fight**

Meanwhile, the race for vice president's post is a 16-way tussle, with incumbent Fuziah Salleh, N Surendran, Mansor Othman, Nurul Izzah Anwar and Tian Chua defending their posts respectively,

The other candidates are:

- 1) Sarawak PKR chief Baru Bian,
- 2) Perak PKR leader Mustaffa Kamil Ayub
- 3) Former Federal Territories deputy chief R Suresh Kumar,
- 4) Bukit Lanjan assemblywoman Elizabeth Wong
- 5) Batu member N. Shanmugam
- 6) Petaling Jaya leader Streram Sinnasamy
- 7) Party strategist Rafizi Ramli
- 8) Permatang leader Mohd Yahya Shahri
- 9) Former Kajang assemblyman Lee Chin Cheh
- 10) Incumbent AMK chief Shamsul Iskandar Mh Akin
- 11) Sri Andalas assemblyman Xavier Jeyakumar

Under the PKR constitution, there are four vice president slots up for grabs, of which one must be reserved for Sabah and Sarawak leaders. The party can appoint another three more veeps.

Meanwhile, AMK chief post saw a three corner fight between Seri Setia assemblyman Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, Negeri Sembilan youth chief Nazree Yunus and Batu Caves assemblyman Amirudin Shari.

Wanita PKR post is a straight fight between incumbent Zuraida Kamaruddin and Selangor exco Rodziah Ismail.

The candidates have until April 10 to withdraw. PKR allows its members to directly elect office

bearers. Elections will be conducted from April 26 to May 11.

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