

Beyond Kajang, Selangor PKR key to new party line-up

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All eyes might be on the Kajang by-election but in PKR, members in Selangor are an important factor in determining the leadership this May as more than 25% of its half a million members who are eligible to vote are from the state.

Party officials say this could mean a hotly-contested election between top state officials, Selangor PKR chairman Azmin Ali and Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim, if the current state mentri besar decides to go for the party deputy presidency. Azmin is the current deputy president.

"144,020 of the 500,001 PKR members who can vote this time come from Selangor, followed by Sabah (86,955)," Datuk Johari Abdul, chairman of the 2014 PKR party elections committee, told The Malaysian Insider in an interview.

He said this meant the influences of the PKR deputy president and his political rival, Khalid, would loom large in the party polls.

PKR will hold its party election this May where the final result is expected to be announced on May 11.

PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is almost certain of being elected president following his decision to run for the seat after the current president, his wife Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, decided to let go of the post.

With that, all eyes will be on the deputy president post. Azmin's camp is reported to be worried that Anwar could have compromised with Khalid to ensure that the process to take over the MB's post goes on smoothly.

"If Anwar has made a compromise with Khalid and supports the latter's bid for the deputy presidency, then Azmin will be in trouble," a supporter of Azmin told The Malaysian Insider.

Also, this election is expected to be hotly-contested and the 2010 election controversy could repeat itself.

Every PKR member has the right to name themselves as candidate in this election, as long as they have been a member for more than one year before January 5 this year.

To ensure that the election goes on smoothly, Johari and his committee have made several preparations so that history does not repeat.

"For a start, we have prepared a complete guidebook on election dos and don'ts, that is the standard procedure which will be distributed to all levels," Johari said.

He is hoping that, should any problems arise, the book will be a guide in solving the issue.

"Secondly, the committee will be appointing a state coordinator to handle state-level elections and set up branch workers to handle branch level polls.

"We have to elect the coordinator from those who are widely-respected by members to ensure that the election will be respected by all," he added.

Every candidate for the branch level election will elect 10 of their supporters to be their branch workers and they will wear clothes according to the groups they are in.

"With this, it means that all parties get to have representatives in the election process," Johari said.

Also, he said, an Election Appeal Committee will be set up to refer to if there were any disputes on the election this time.

It will be set up by the PKR politics bureau and headed by Datuk Kamarul Bahrin who will handle any appeal after the election.

"We hope that all members will be happy with the election especially since the party polls will start after we win in Kajang," Johari said, referring to the March 23 by-election, which Anwar is expected to win.

To ensure a trouble-free party election, Johari said it will be done in a "pesta" or carnival-style where all parties are encouraged to campaign positively.

"Only three things are prohibited, which is giving out gifts after functions, giving money or any offer of goods and services to the voters," he added.

Candidates, he went on, are allowed to campaign as freely as long as they only promote themselves and not demean other candidates.

"If they are caught doing this, their candidacy can be cancelled," he said.

For the president, deputy president and vice-president posts, a RM5,000 fee will be imposed for each candidate while for the central committee, it will be RM1,000.

Branch-level candidates would have to pay RM200 and for other posts it will be RM50.

Nomination day for those contesting for the central posts will be on March 29 at the party's headquarters in Petaling Jaya.

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